

**Cambridge  
townscape**



# **Cambridge Townscape**

## **An Analysis**

**Department of Architecture and Planning**  
**City of Cambridge**                      **Autumn 1971**



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# Introduction

As part of the problem associated with the investigations into the future growth of Cambridge it is important to ensure that those qualities which create the essential character of the city are not compromised. Pressure for change will always exist, just as society itself is always changing and creating new patterns of functions and new patterns of accommodation. The problem of conservation is to keep the essential character which makes one town different from another, not just by preserving the town's most important buildings but also by controlling its rate and scale of change. A strategy to preserve and improve the environment, with positive provision for essential functions and emerging public needs, must form part of these principles.

The City Council has repeatedly stressed its concern with the maintenance and enhancement of the character and amenity of Cambridge. It was therefore considered advisable to produce an appraisal of the existing character of the conservation area - its "Townscape" or Town scenery - laying down general policies for the guidance of owners and prospective developers. This report, therefore, examines the present urban fabric of those areas within Conservation Area No. 1 (designated in 1968) where pressure for change exists.

The designation of a Conservation Area has a specific effect on day-to-day planning control. Applications for development are carefully considered, not only in relation to their surroundings, but also to the area as a whole. All significant proposals are advertised in order to allow the public to comment. The contents of this report, which is an analysis of the existing physical character of the historic core of the town, represents the opinions of the Department of Architecture and Planning.



The Department would welcome the views not only of those Societies concerned with conservation and preservation, but also comments on this analysis from all those members of the public who are interested in the qualities which help to make Cambridge the unique town it is.

This townscape report is the first of a series of documents which the Department of Architecture and Planning hopes to prepare identifying important qualities of different parts of the City. It is expected that these future reports will include detailed studies illustrating proposals for improvement to the environment.

The present urban form of the central area of the City reflects the history of its development and the peculiarities of its early problems in finding suitable building land. Thus the central core, which is now generally in commercial use, is surrounded by College and University buildings and, in turn, these are surrounded by open spaces primarily along the river and the common lands. Beyond this again are the main residential areas of which only the area to the east, around New Square, is included in this study. The different ages and types of development and the abundant open space gives the centre of Cambridge a unique character, both in visual and architectural terms, and it is just this character which the present analysis is seeking to record.

I. M. PURDY.  
City Architect and Planning Officer.





AREA CONSIDERED IN THE REPORT  
Scale 6 inches to a mile



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# Historical Background



King's Parade c.1887 from a painting by Louise Rayner

### Origins.

Early settlement in the Cambridge area took place on sites where chalk outcrops and raised alluvial gravel deposits afforded dry sites in an area dominated by low lying marshland. Of the four original sites, Castle Hill, Chesterton, Trumpington and Grantchester, it was the Castle Hill site which achieved dominance as it was also situated at the head of the navigable waterway of the River Granta (Cam).

The Romans enhanced the importance of the Castle Hill settlement by building two major roads which are thought to have intersected there, Akeman Street and the Via Devana, and by building a bridge across the Granta a few yards downstream of the present Magdalene Bridge. Traces of the Roman camp's street pattern are evident in the Castle Hill area. It is unlikely, however, that the settlement was important in Roman terms, mostly because it was impossible to bring the heavy wet land surrounding it into agricultural use.

### Early Growth.

During the Anglo-Saxon period (450-875 A.D.) it seems that another settlement was established on the south bank of the Granta with its nucleus in the area of the present King's Parade, and there is direct evidence from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 875 A.D. that this and the Castle Hill Settlement were linked by a new bridge on approximately the same site as the Roman one.

The Danish influx after the year 875 A.D. probably consolidated the town as a trading settlement, and the southern bank of the Granta developed into a thriving seaport, bringing wealth into the community and making possible the building of St. Bene't's Church, with its fine Saxon tower, and the establishment of a local mint. At some time during this period it is probable that the King's Ditch was first



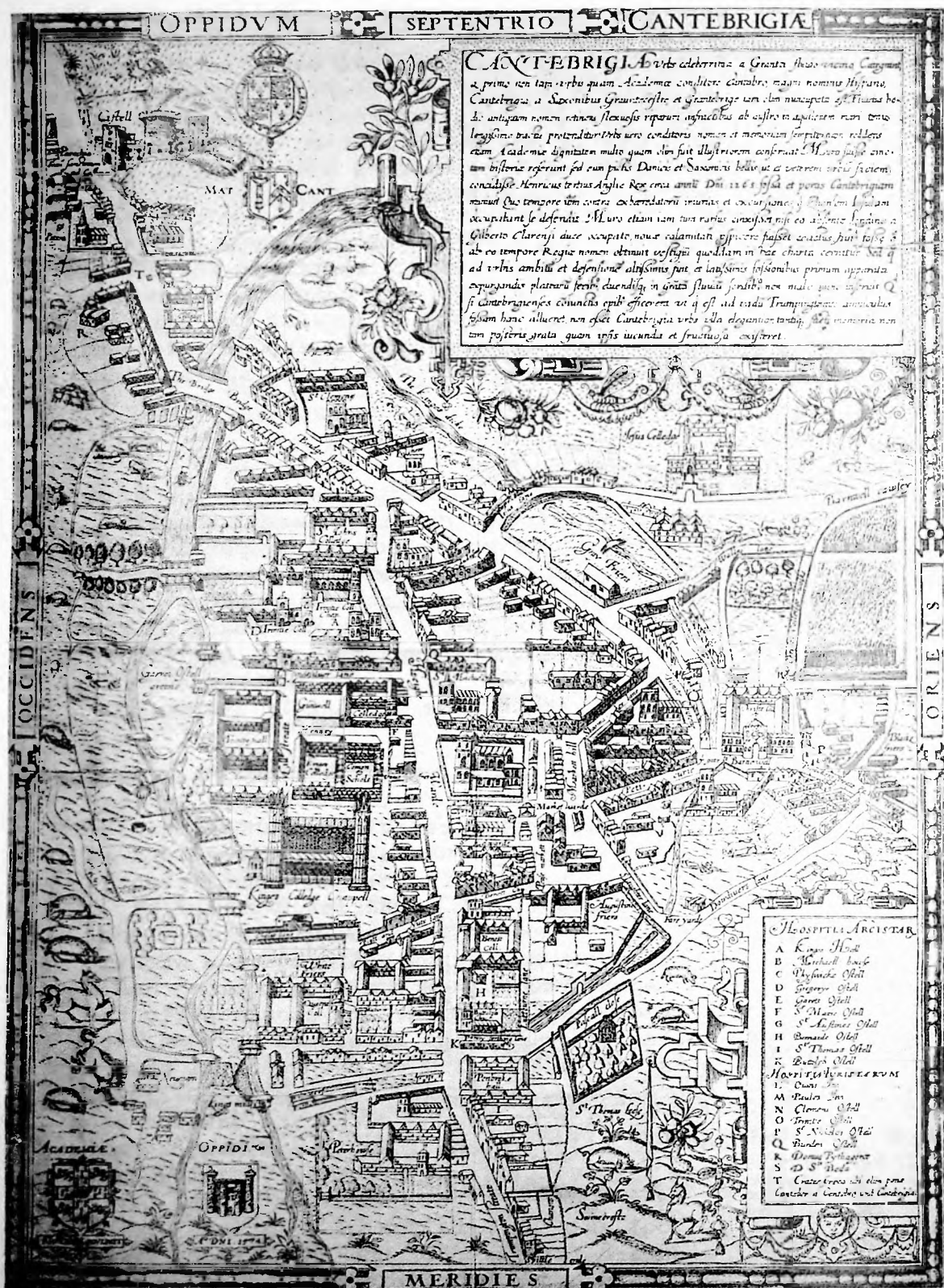
cut for defensive reasons. This ran from the north-west corner of Jesus Green through to Mill Lane and enclosed the early settlement within the loop of the river. Evidence of its existence is still apparent in the street plan of parts of the central area, and Park Parade, Hobson Street, St. Tibb's Row, Pembroke Street and Mill Lane follow its course.

The Normans had built a castle on the present Castle Hill in 1068, the mound of which is still visible, although none of the buildings remain, and had established the administrative importance of the town over the surrounding region.

#### The Medieval Town.

The King's Ditch certainly marked the limit of the built-up area at this early period, except for small groups of houses at Newnham and Barnwell. By the thirteenth century there was already growth to the east and south of the Ditch, but further expansion was limited by the unsuitability of the marshy river ground for building, and by the open field system.

The University was already established in the town by this date, having developed in the main from earlier religious foundations, but did not possess elaborate buildings, and it was not until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that the significant period of University and College building took place. By this time suitable building land within the area enclosed by the King's Ditch had already been occupied, and consequently the Collegiate buildings developed both on sites outside the boundary of the medieval town (Peterhouse, Pembroke, Emmanuel 1240-1347), and on made up ground along the eastern edge of the river (Michael House and King's Hall - now Trinity), (Clare, Gonville, Trinity Hall, King's, Queens', St. Catharine's, the Law School and the Arts School - 1324-1473). The westward extension of the later group necessitated canalisation of the river and



Cambridge in 1574



further draining of the low lying river flats which led ultimately to the creation of the stretch of college gardens now known as the Backs.

#### The 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries.

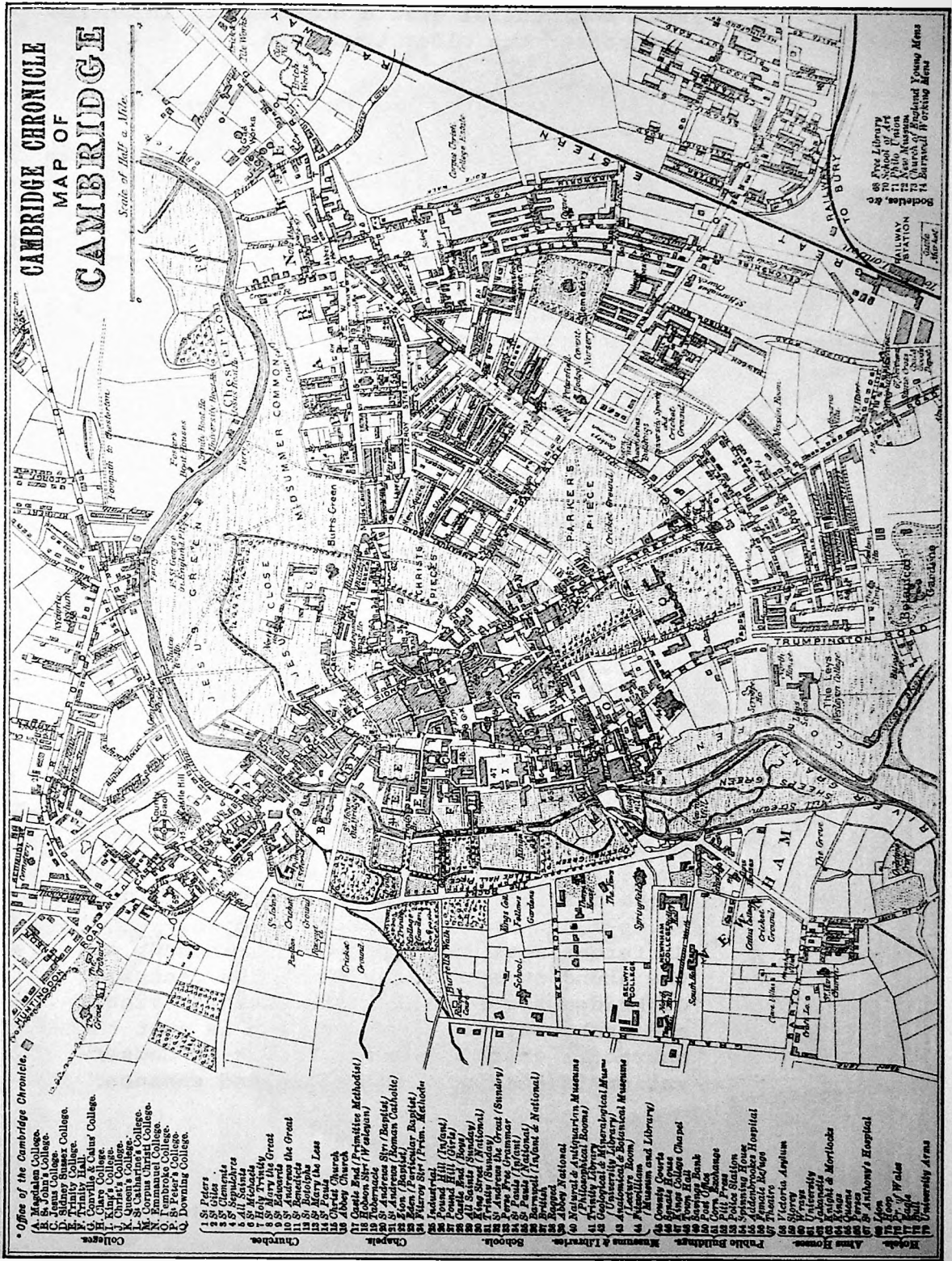
From the mid-sixteenth century the growth of the town can be traced in a series of maps and plans, the earliest of which, by Lyne, is for 1574. At this date Cambridge did not extend much further than the medieval town, except for a scatter of houses flanking the two main roads in to the town, Trumpington Street and St. Andrew's Street. Beyond the river to the west was open country, and Parker's Piece, Christ's Pieces and Butt Green defined the edge of the built-up area on the east. For the next 200 years there was virtually no expansion of the developed area despite the fact that the population had almost doubled. This lack of expansion was undoubtedly due to the nature of the land in the immediate environs of the city which was either marsh-land or open-field common agricultural land. The growth in population must, therefore, have been accommodated by increasing densities in the existing built-up area, and much of the central core of the town must have been similar to the very tight development pattern which is still apparent in such areas as Botolph Lane and Pembroke Street, and the land between Peas Hill and King's Parade, where there is virtually no open area between the dwellings.

#### The 19th Century.

The release of land suitable for building by the enclosure of the open-fields between 1801 and 1807 gave rise to an immediate expansion of the built-up area mostly to the south and east of the old town. By 1858 a whole band of new housing had been developed from Newtown in the south to Newmarket Road in the east. Much of this was in terrace form and some specifically planned, and this together with the short building period gives this







Cambridge in 1899

inner residential area a homogeneity in sharp contrast to the older town area.

In 1845 the railway was opened, though not without many arguments as to its best location. This in turn led to further growth in the south-eastern part of the city. The general growth of population during the nineteenth century also led to the development of areas to the north of the river, to the east along Newmarket Road and in Newnham. Furthermore there was a rapid decline in the resident population of the old centre as old and unsafe houses were demolished and people sought houses in the new suburban areas, which were also nearer to the industries then being developed. The present century has seen the continued peripheral growth of development to accommodate the increasing population, and the coalescence of all the older village centres into the developed area.

The present urban form of the central area of Cambridge reflects the history of its development and the peculiarities of its early problems of finding suitable building land. Thus the central core which is now largely in commercial use is surrounded by college and university building, and in turn these are surrounded by the open spaces along the river and the common lands, Jesus Green, Butt Green, Christ's Pieces and Parker's Piece. Beyond these again are the main residential areas of which only that on the east around New Square is included in Conservation Area No. 1. The different ages and types of development and the abundant open space gives the centre of Cambridge a unique character both in visual and architectural terms, and it is just this character which the present work on Conservation is seeking to maintain and enhance.





COMMERCIAL CORE  
UNIVERSITY USES  
RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER USES  
OPEN SPACES

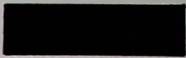
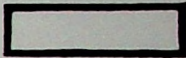

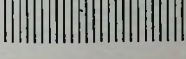



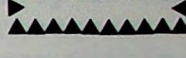



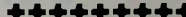





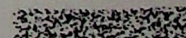


SCALE 6 INCHES:1 MILE  
**CONSERVATION AREA: URBAN FORM**





# NOTATION

Feature Buildings	
Group Value Buildings: Category 1	
Group Value Buildings: Category 2	
Listed Buildings	
Substantial Buildings	
Redevelopment Acceptable	
Redevelopment Desirable	
Areas Subject to Redevelopment Proposals	
Focal Points	
Highlights	
Frontage Lines of Value	
Significant Walls, Screens, & Railings	
Space Closure Needed	
Defaced Facades	
Significant Trees	
Important Views	
Good Floorscape or Landscape	
Floorscape or Landscape in Need of Improvement	

All Plans at 1:1250 Scale Unless Otherwise Stated



The Townscape appraisal which follows attempts to analyse the quality of the urban environment in those areas under study. Initially it is not intended to analyse in detail every aspect of the townscape or to give guidance on the detailed improvements and changes which may be necessary to improve the quality of the environment; this will follow in subsequent publications on the individual sectors within the Conservation Area.

Because policy decisions are implied by the material included here, it is essential that the notation of the plans is fully understood; consequently the following pages give a detailed explanation of the colours and symbols which are used on the survey plans.

### FEATURE BUILDINGS.

These are buildings of architectural significance which are especially important in the townscape. For the most part they are buildings which have been listed for this reason by the Department of the Environment. Present legislation gives these buildings considerable protection in that permission is needed both for demolition or alteration, and in the latter case is only given when there would be no adverse effects on the buildings as a result. Other buildings which fall within this category are Victorian and modern buildings of architectural quality which do not appear on the present statutory lists by virtue of their more recent construction.

The policy towards Feature Buildings must be one of retention in their present external form.



Little Trinity, Jesus Lane  
A Feature Building



#### GROUP VALUE BUILDINGS. CATEGORY 1.

These are buildings which, like Feature Buildings, make a positive contribution to the townscape as part of a group, but which, unlike Feature Buildings, do not have any great intrinsic architectural merits.

Until quite recently such buildings were not afforded any statutory protection; but under the 1968 Planning Act listing of buildings for their group value was made possible, and is now in progress. Consequently at present most of the group value buildings shown in this survey do not have the protection of statutory listing. Nevertheless, a policy of careful protection should apply to these buildings, and their retention be encouraged wherever possible. Where redevelopment becomes essential the new buildings must be carefully designed to respect the quality of the group as a whole in terms of frontage lines, building height, elevational treatment and building materials.

#### GROUP VALUE BUILDINGS. CATEGORY 2.

Apart from those groups which made a positive contribution to the townscape, there are in the Conservation Area other groups, mostly of nineteenth century terraces, which are of lesser townscape quality but which in total produce an environment of character. Where this notation has been used, a policy which seeks to preserve this environmental character in terms of the use and scale of the buildings will be applied.

#### SUBSTANTIAL BUILDINGS.

This is essentially a neutral category. It includes those buildings, other than those above, which by virtue of their recent construction or substantial nature are unlikely to be redeveloped. In most cases

these buildings occupy large sites, and therefore, if redevelopment was to take place, the impact on the townscape would be great. Consequently, particular care would be needed at the design stage to ensure that new buildings took careful account of their setting, and respected the townscape quality of the area where they were sited.

#### PLACES WHERE REDEVELOPMENT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE.

This category includes buildings which make no positive contribution to the townscape and whose redevelopment would not be opposed on visual grounds. Plans for them would be judged against criteria normal for a conservation area in that any new structure should contribute to the quality of the street or area in which it is situated.

#### PLACES WHERE REDEVELOPMENT IS DESIRABLE.

This category covers both sites and buildings where it is considered that development or redevelopment would improve the visual quality of the townscape. It makes no assessment of the economic factors governing redevelopment.

#### FOCAL POINTS.

This notation applies to those points which are a natural visual focus in the townscape. It does not necessarily imply that the feature is of any architectural quality, but suggests that it has a visual significance beyond the confines of its immediate environment which should be recognised if the building is to be redeveloped.

#### HIGHLIGHTS.

This notation does not apply to whole buildings but is used to specify particularly interesting features such as doorways,



fountains, statues, etc., which enhance the visual quality of buildings or spaces.



Gonville & Caius  
College; Waterhouse  
Building  
A Focal Point

#### FRONTAGE LINES.

In many cases within the town it is not just the quality of the buildings but their relationship to each other which is of importance to the character of the area. The frontages on either side of a street define an enclosed space which may be in a critical relationship with the scale of the buildings. There are many examples where this relationship has been lost by redevelopment being set back and thereby breaking the rhythmic flow of the elevations and spaces.

This survey, therefore, indicates frontage

lines which it is considered are of significant importance to the visual character of a street or space and has classified them as:-

Frontage lines of value to the townscape which should be retained. In this case any new building should conform to the height and alignment of the existing frontage.

Significant walls, screens and railings. Walls and other screens are often as significant as buildings in defining and giving character to a space. The prime example of this is perhaps the railings between the Senate House and Senate House Hill. Railings and other forms of decorative ironwork are attractive incidentals in the street scene, often adding an element of unity to frontage lines. Important examples are thus indicated and should be preserved as far as possible in their present form.



Wrought Iron Screen  
St. John's College



Space closure (other than building) needed.  
This notation is used when it is considered that either a space needs a visual 'stop' or when an area of visual unattractiveness (such as a car park) requires screening. Solid visual barriers, such as walls, or semi-solid, such as trees or hedges, would be appropriate as conditions dictate.



Space Closure Needed

DEFACED FACADES.

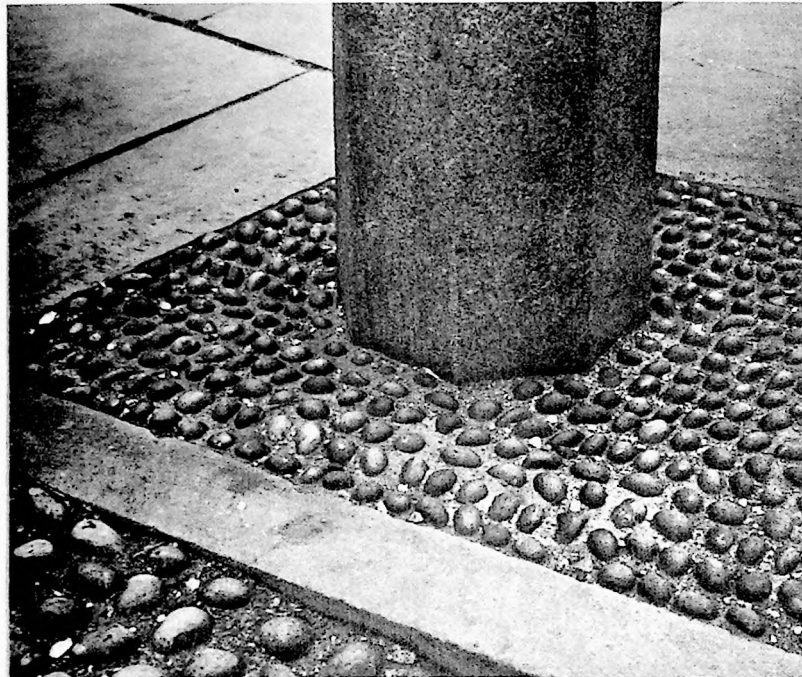
This notation is used to indicate facades which have been spoiled by untidy advertisements, poor decoration, unco-ordinated shop signs, poorly designed shop fronts, etc.

LANDSCAPE AND FLOORSCAPE.

It is not only the buildings of a town but also the spaces between them which are important to the environment. These spaces are either landscaped with trees, grass, flower beds, etc., or hard surfaced with paving, cobbles, tarmac, etc.

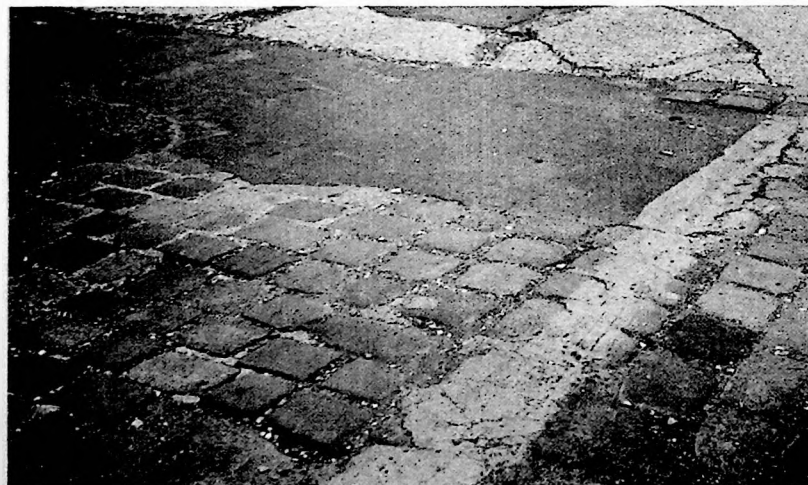
These areas have been divided into two categories:-

Good landscape or floorspace, where the policy is for retention wherever possible.



Good Floorscape

Landscape or floorspace which is in need of improvement.



Floorscape in need of Improvement



## TREES.

Also indicated are significant mature trees of value to the townscape. All these trees have been surveyed and their remaining life estimated. Where this is likely to be less than 15 years, the policy of early replanting will be investigated in the detailed studies which will follow this report.



Tree outside  
Emmanuel College

## VIEWS.

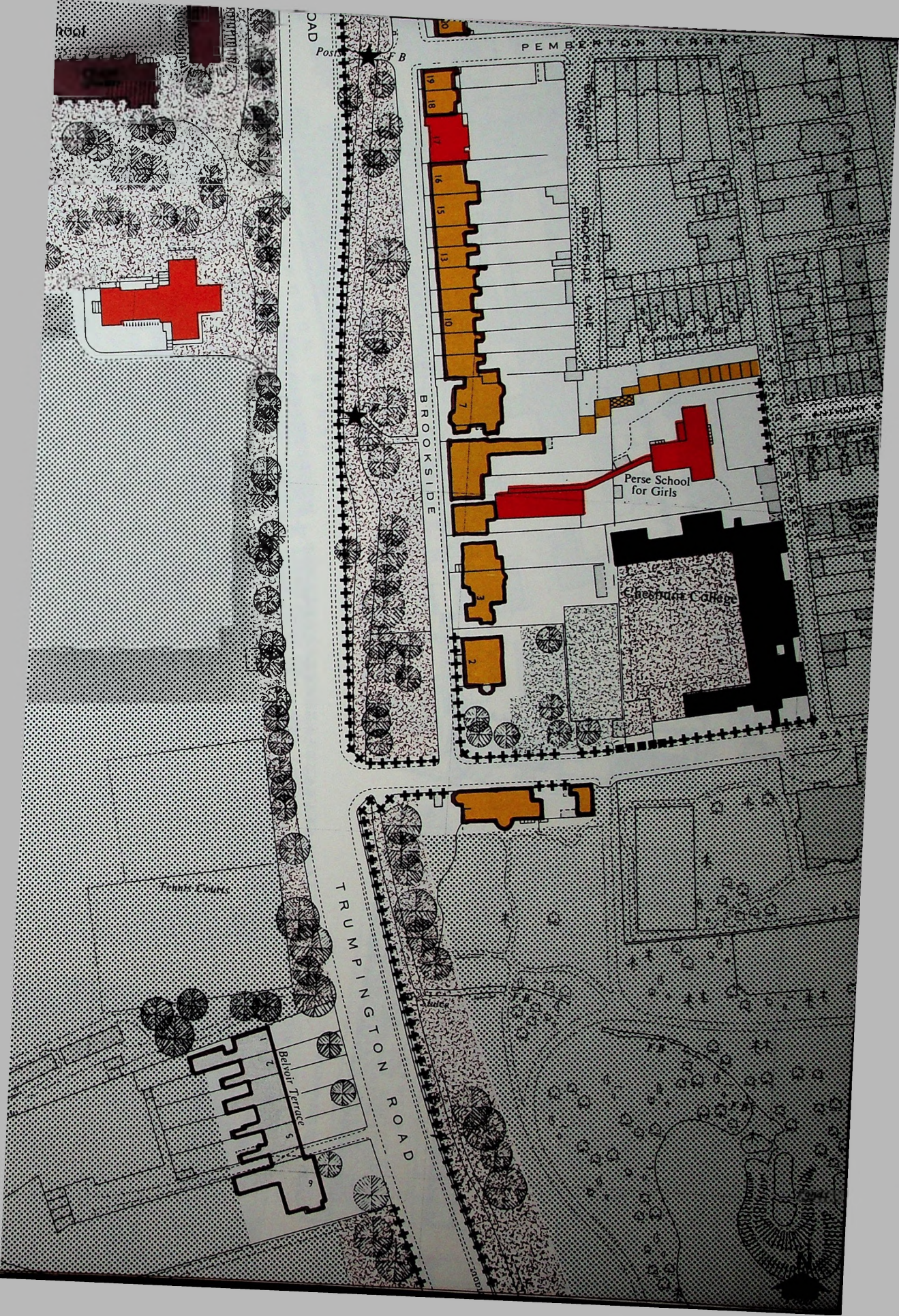
The quality of environment in certain parts of the town is enhanced by views down streets, across spaces, between buildings and to other dominant buildings. Where these are significant they have been indicated and care should be taken not to block them by the development of intervening buildings or features. The existence and importance of these lines of view will determine the permitted heights of new buildings in many parts of the Conservation Area.

# Trumpington Road to King's Parade

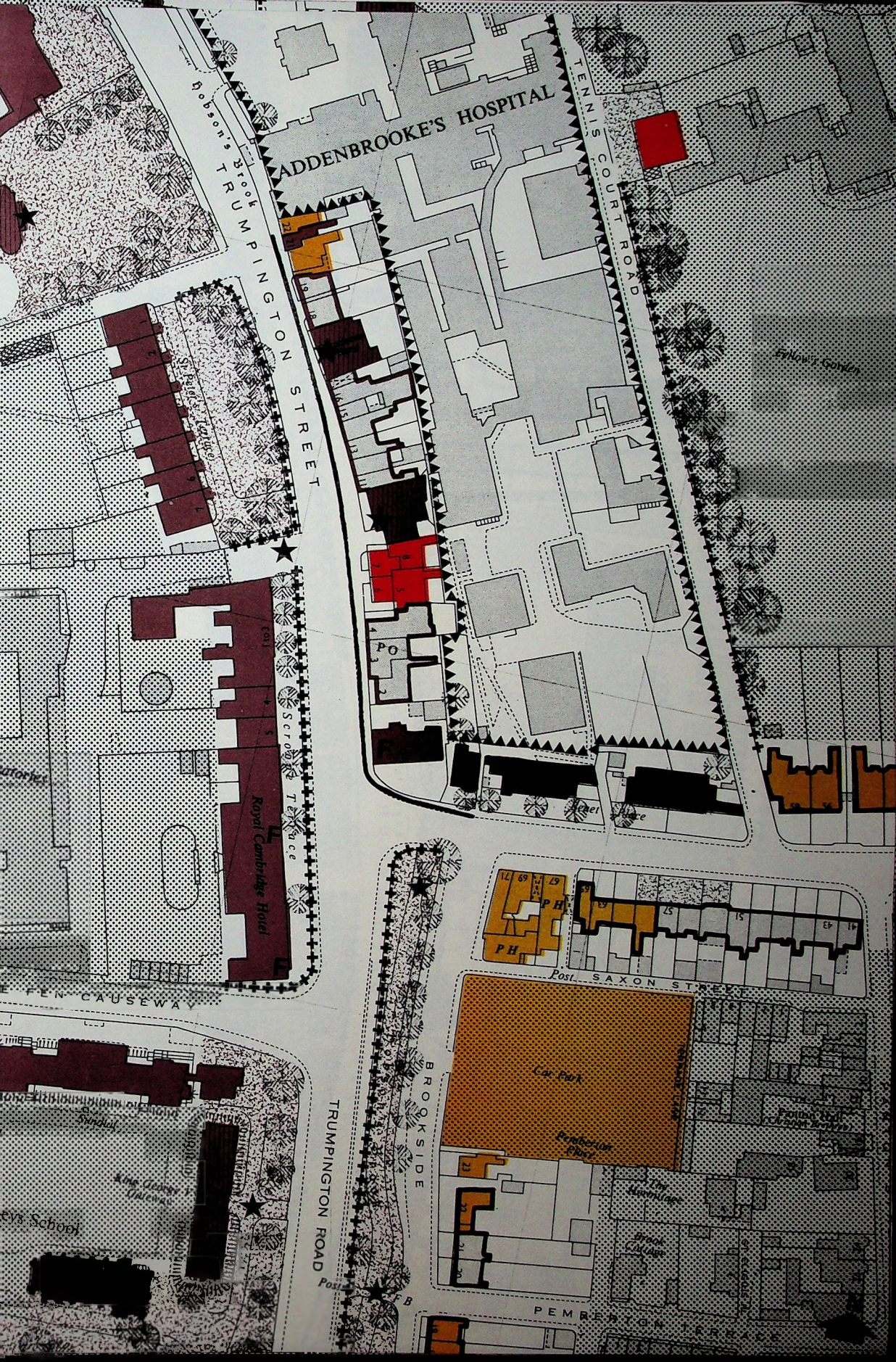


King's Parade

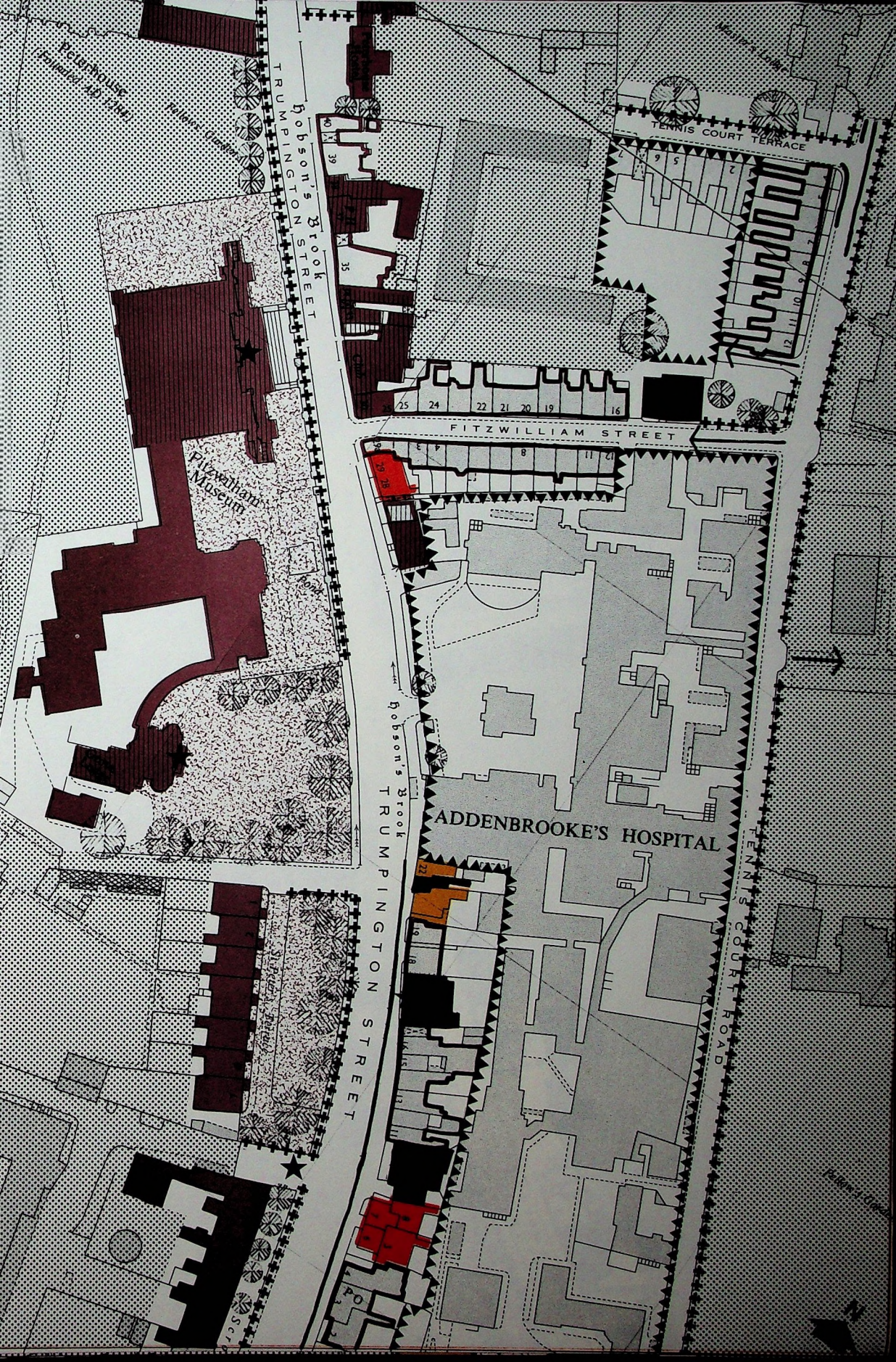
















St. Catharine's College  
(Founded A.D. 1235)

Corpus Christi College  
(Founded 1352)

Pembroke College  
(Founded A.D. 1382)

Emmanuel Congregational Church

Little St. Mary's Church  
(1874)

Peterhouse  
(Founded A.D. 1284)

TRUMPINGTON STREET

PEMBROKE STREET

Hobson's Brook

TRUMPINGTON STORES

RENT

MILL LANE

MARY'S LANE

Geology

Works

Leisure Hall

Labourer's

Labourer's

Manner's Lodge

Manner's Lodge

Manner's Lodge

Chapel

Old Hall

Old Hall

Old Hall

Old Hall

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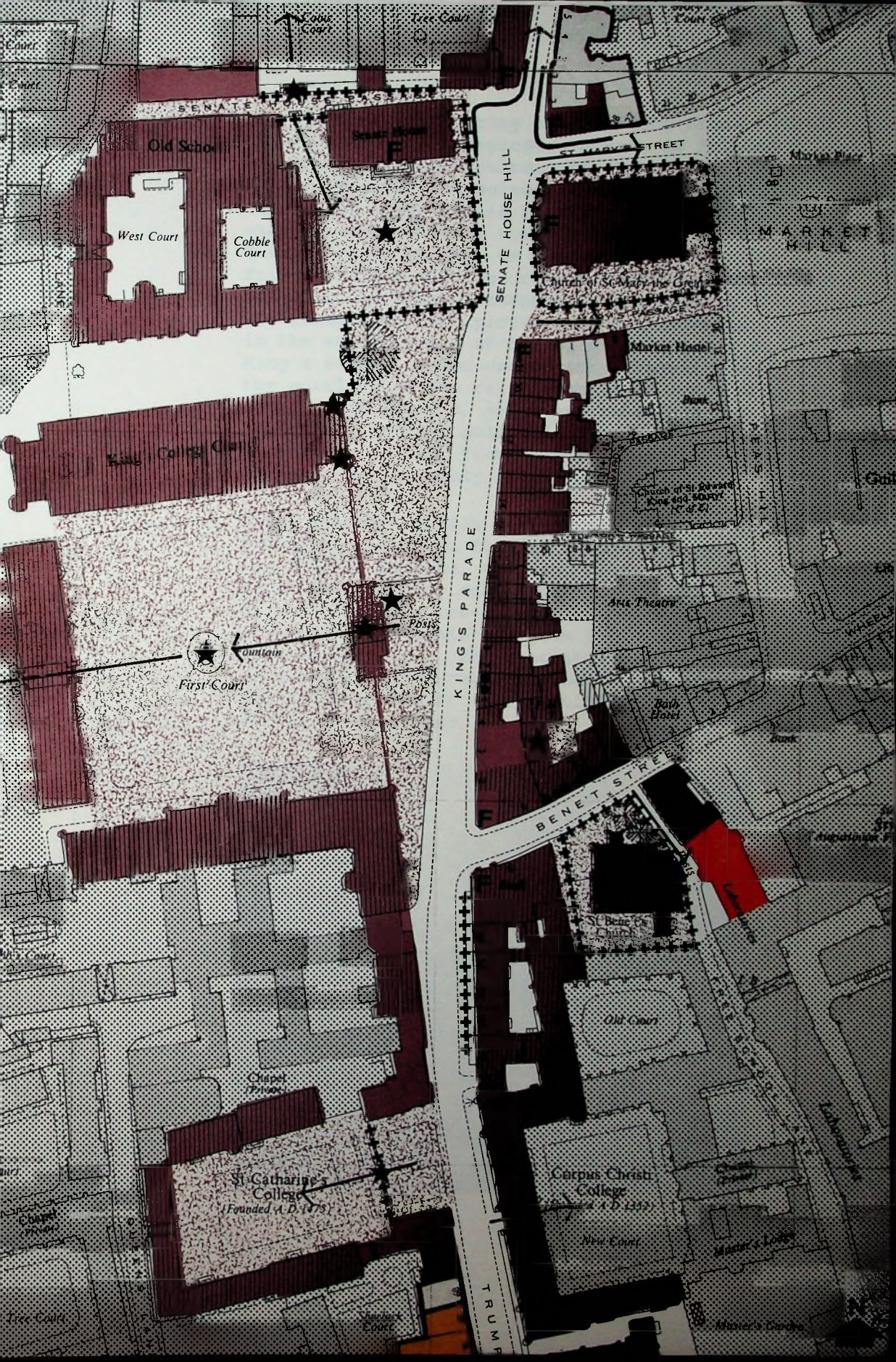
Old Hall

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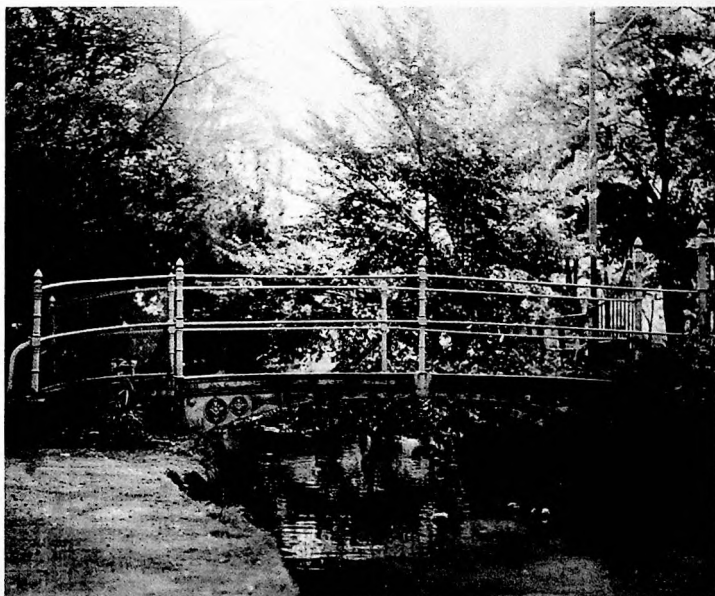






The approach to the city centre along Trumpington Road and Trumpington Street is full of the character and architecture which is associated with the essence of Cambridge as a University city, and is by far the best of the many entrances to the town. From Belvoir Terrace right through to the entrance to Trinity Street the road curves first one way and then the other presenting a continually unfolding townscape picture which culminates in the superb group of buildings and spaces in King's Parade. Because of its complexity and the subtlety of its relationships in terms of architectural style, scale and materials, a rigorously defined policy is necessary to protect the street from unsympathetic changes which could adversely affect its character.

North of the junction with Brooklands Avenue, Trumpington Road is flanked by open spaces - the Botanic Gardens, the land along Vicar's Brook and the Leys school playing fields - and by mature forest trees, which form an avenue of substantial scale and give the area a park-like atmosphere. The majority of the trees have an estimated further life of between 30 and 45 years and it is essential that they should be preserved.



Hobson's Brook



The only group of buildings of any significance is Brookside, which is protected both visually and psychologically by a narrow strip of landscape garden running along Hobson's Brook. The garden, which has railings and small footbridges of sensitive design, gives the houses an atmosphere of dignified Victorian seclusion. In themselves, they are imposing rather than architecturally distinguished and any redevelopment should maintain the existing scale.

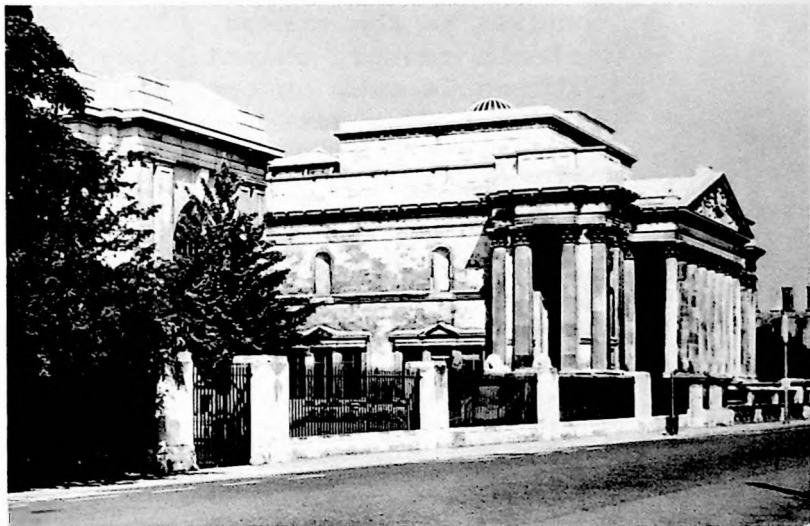
At the Royal Cambridge junction where Trumpington Road is met by Fen Causeway and Lensfield Road, the entire character changes very markedly. Up to this point the predominant feeling has been of buildings in a rural setting. The junction marks the entrance into Urban Cambridge where quite suddenly buildings become the dominant visual feature and there is a sense of arriving in the City



The Royal Cambridge  
Road Junction

Trumpington Street at this point has two contrasting frontages. On the west side Scroope Terrace and St. Peter's Terrace are well proportioned examples of mid-nineteenth century formal street architecture, enclosed by railings and planting, while on the east side there is an informal group of buildings of varying architectural styles, heights and materials thrown into prominence, both by

the curve of the street and by its frontage alignment in relation to the line of Trumpington Road. Apart from their merit as a group, Nos. 1-22, Trumpington Street act as a screen between the small scale of the street and the large scale buildings which will be developed on the Addenbrooke's Hospital site. This part of the street, therefore, should be carefully preserved, with the few exceptions shown on the plan where infilling on a suitable scale on the existing frontage line and in sympathy with surrounding buildings could be allowed. Particular care must also be taken to minimise the effect on the townscape of the road proposals for the improvement of the Royal Cambridge junction in order to retain the sharp division in character between Trumpington Street and Trumpington Road.



The Fitzwilliam Museum

North of St. Peter's Terrace the Fitzwilliam Museum completely dominates the west side of Trumpington Street. Although there have been additions to the building during this century, the main part opposite Fitzwilliam Street is the dominant element. It is an important nineteenth century neo-classical building constructed between 1837 and 1848, to designs by the architect George Basevi, and the collonaded entrance approached by a broad flight of steps together with the massive iron



railings which run along the street frontage add a quality of monumentality to this part of the street.

This quality is exaggerated by the intimate, homely scale of the buildings on the opposite side of the street which contain two basically sixteenth century timber frame houses - the "Little Rose" Inn and Tunwell's Court; Fitzwilliam House, a good plain brick building of 1727, and three good early nineteenth century houses Nos. 25 to 27. This group should be preserved in its present form.

Peterhouse, next to the Fitzwilliam Museum, differs in plan from the majority of Cambridge colleges in that instead of a range of buildings closing off a court from the street line with only a single view through the entrance, it sets its two main ranges at right angles to the street, places the early seventeenth century chapel between them and links the whole with an open arcade, thus creating an unfolding set of spaces and views into the Old Court.

Opposite Peterhouse, the Master's Lodge, which is one of the best pieces of early eighteenth century domestic architecture in Cambridge, and the new Hostel are set back from the street, and the space created is defined by the tower at the end of the south range of Pembroke college buildings.

At this point the character of Trumpington Street changes significantly. The buildings on either side come directly down to the back of the pavement and enclose the street more tightly. This sense of enclosure is heightened by the curve of the street, the long ranges of Pembroke College, the larger scale of the buildings and the vertical emphasis created by the towers of Emmanuel Congregational Church, St. Botolph's Church and the Pitt Press building. The latter is particularly important in the townscape as it acts as a terminal feature for views north-

wards from Trumpington Street, and southwards from King's Parade, and thus joins the two parts of the street together visually. The sense of enclosure is not relieved significantly, except by St. Botolph's churchyard, by the views down the roads which run off Trumpington Street in this area, as these also tend to be narrow and tightly enclosed. The buildings on the corner of Silver Street, although of little merit in themselves, complete the enclosure of this part of Trumpington Street by stepping forward from the line of the Pitt Press building.



Trumpington Street

Again at this point, the character of Trumpington Street changes. The long range of Corpus Christi College, together with the Gothic style early nineteenth century terrace to the north is foiled by the large open court of St. Catharine's College. Although the buildings on the east side follow the



line of the street those on the west drop back to open out into King's Parade, which is perhaps the pre-eminent piece of Cambridge townscape with great qualities of space, light and visual contrast. The sense of space and light comes in part from the actual physical size of the area framed by buildings in contrast with the constriction of the streets which lead into it, and in part from the views across the lawns and through the screen and gateway of King's College and the railings of the Senate House into the serene open spaces which lie beyond. Visual contrast is all important. The college and University buildings on the west side are monumental formal set pieces gathered round the pinnacled east end of King's College chapel and set apart from the town buildings by the lawns in front of them. The horse-chestnut tree in front of the chapel is probably the most important single tree from a townscape point of view in the whole Conservation Area, and complements perfectly the range of buildings. In contrast the town buildings bustle right down to the street line and are a very informal grouping of small scale buildings of different age, various styles, small unit frontages, different coloured materials and contrasting shop fronts. Their informality and charm gives them an importance as a group in this setting out of proportion to their architectural merit.

It is vitally important, therefore, that their value as a group and the complexity of their relationship is not threatened by pressures for change.

The shop front of No. 6 is the only one which is unsympathetic to the visual entity of the group and represents the intrusion of just that "universal high street" facade which is so out of character with the best parts of Cambridge townscape.

One of the most harmful intrusions into King's

Parade is the continual presence of parked and moving vehicles. As further off-street car parks become available it is intended to remove on-street parking in parts of the central area. King's Parade must have high priority for this action, and it is desirable not only to remove the parked cars from the east side of the street but also from the front courtyard of King's College and in front of the Senate House. Also, when alternative routes are available, it is hoped that an alteration in the pattern of traffic flow can be effected in the central area, and this will give the opportunity to close King's Parade from the north side of King's College entrance to St. Mary's Passage to create a pedestrian area.

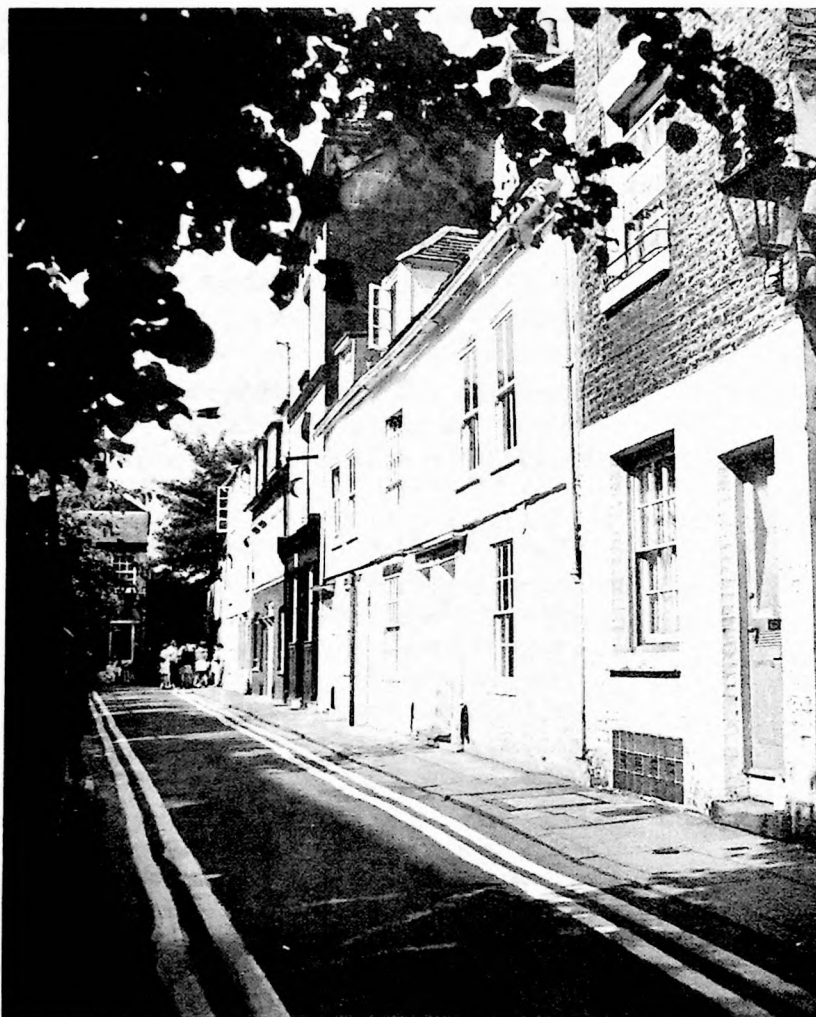
Running off Trumpington Street are various other streets and lanes having townscape qualities which need consideration.

Opposite the Fitzwilliam Museum is Fitzwilliam Street, which links Trumpington Street and Tennis Court Road. It is a single early nineteenth century residential development which has remained virtually unaltered and has some very good architectural details - cast iron railings, window guards and balconies. The view down the narrow street is terminated at the western end by the museum and at the eastern end by the trees on the boundary of Downing College. Because it is a unified architectural whole which represents a specific product of the period it should be preserved in its present form.

Next to Peterhouse is Little St. Mary's Lane, which links Trumpington Street with the river-side. The narrow street with the unusual and delightful churchyard on one side and some of the few examples of small scale domestic architecture dating back in part to the seventeenth century on the other, is a remnant of "Old Cambridge". At the western end there is scope for improvement by redevelopment of the old industrial premises behind Nos. 12 and 14,



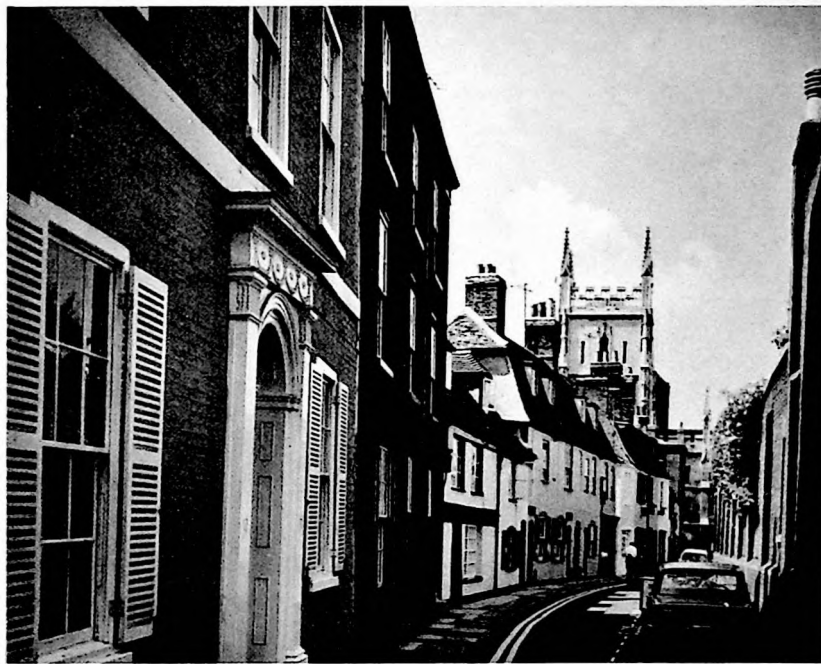
possibly for residential use, but the rest of the buildings are in general well maintained and complemented by small details like the old street lamps. The buildings should therefore be preserved in their present form.



Little St. Mary's Lane

Opposite the Pitt Press building are Pembroke Street and Botolph Lane, which enclose an island site of buildings of great charm. The houses in Botolph Lane are similar in character to those in Little St. Mary's Lane, many of them dating back to the sixteenth century, and also front on to a pleasant open churchyard. The lane itself is on a gentle double curve, which adds to the informality of

the group as a whole, and the tower of the Pitt Press Building at the western end and the significantly higher Botolph House at the eastern end act as terminal features. There is scope for improving the lane in terms of paving and general floorscape, but basically the buildings should be preserved in their present form. Botolph House, built c. 1790, joins the group in the Lane with that fronting on to Pembroke Street, and itself forms a terminal feature which closes views westwards from Downing Street and southwards down Free School Lane.



Botolph Lane

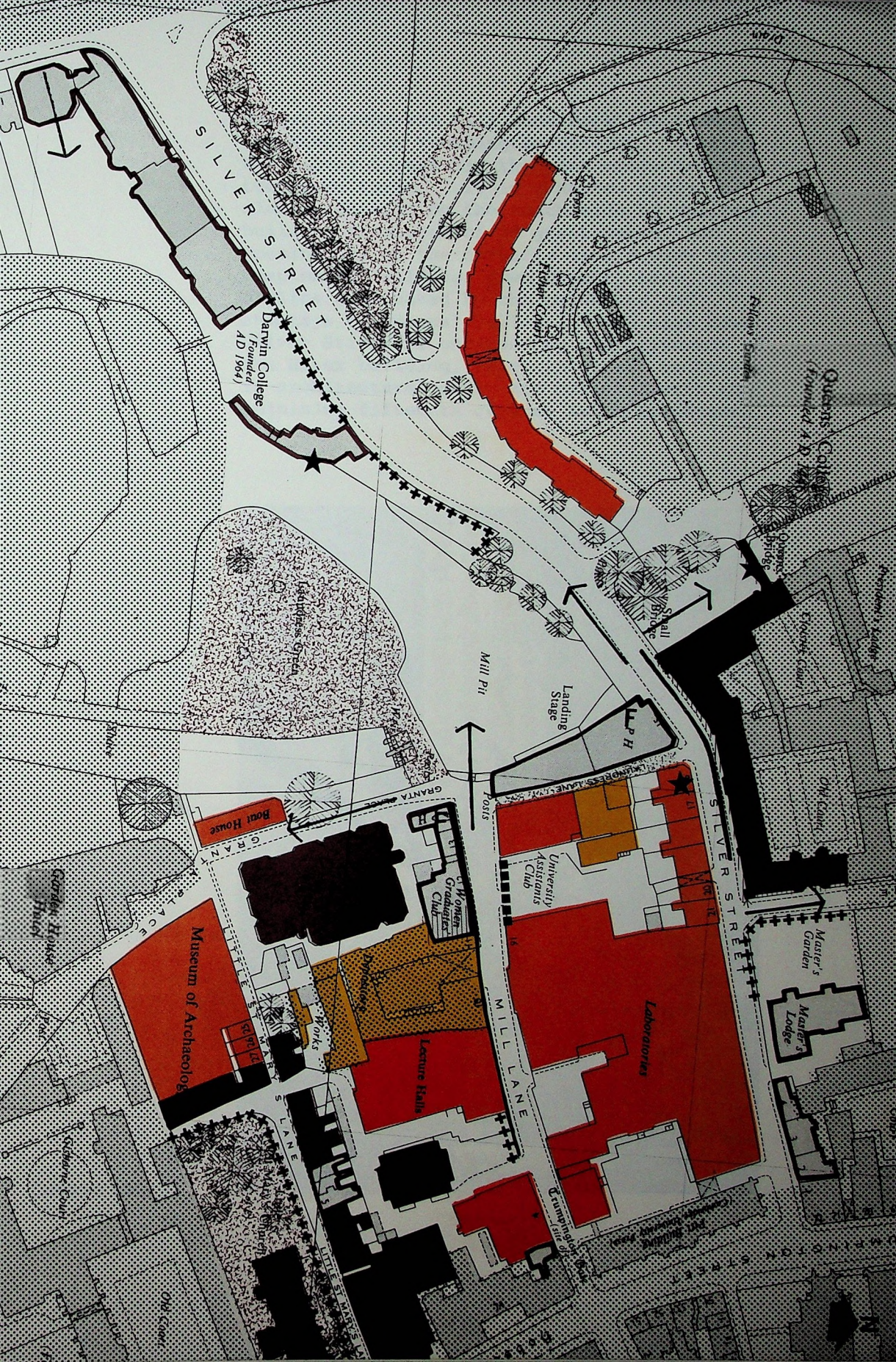


# Silver Street, Mill Lane and Queen's Road



The River Frontage from Sheep's Green







Silver Street and Mill Lane both run down to the river from Trumpington Street. Of the two Silver Street has the most character in townscape terms. It is a narrow space closely defined on the south side by uniform building frontages of no great merit, but opening out on the north to give a view of the complex of buildings down Queens' Lane, the skyline punctuated by the gatehouse and chimneys of Queens' College. The view down Silver Street is enclosed by the alignment of the Essex building, which in itself contrasts in architectural style and material with the adjoining fifteenth century brick frontages.



Queen's Lane

Mill Lane has not the same feeling of enclosure, partly because the buildings are more varied in height and frontage line and more especially because it opens out at the western end directly on to the riverside. Laundress Lane, which links the two, is uninteresting architecturally but has character as a result of its constant use as a pedestrian link. It tends to be spoilt by occasional car parking at the northern end and could be improved by treatment to the floorscape.

Both Silver Street and Mill Lane open out at the western end on to the most important part of the area, the riverside itself. There is a very sharp distinction here between the built up urban area and the large and well wooded open spaces to the west and much visual pleasure in the contrast between the two. The buildings which mark the frontage are varied between the informal grouping of both the "Anchor" and the "Mill" public houses and the formal facades of Queens' College, the Department of Land Economy and the Graduate Centre. This variety is enhanced by the liveliness of the river itself, the different levels of the upper and lower river joined by the constantly moving Mill Race, the clutter of punts at the two landing stages and above all by the people who use the area as a meeting place.

The western end of Silver Street is very open in character. From the new bridge with delightful views over the Mill Pond and past the river frontage of Queens', the road curves away to its junction with Newnham Road. On the northern side is Fisher Court, a curved building of forceful shape and detail which is out of character with its surroundings. This building, and the adjoining outbuildings, is the only interruption in the superb group of semi-formal open spaces known as the Backs, which stretch northwards as far as St. John's College. On the south side of Silver Street is Darwin College, which is notable for





The Mill Pond



The Granary. Part of  
Darwin College

another good example of successful infilling. The architects have created a new block which not only respects the scale and form of the adjoining Georgian buildings, but also links the whole group on this important corner site.



Darwin College

Queen's Road links the western end of Silver Street with the western end of Northampton Street. When alternative routes are available it is intended to restrict through traffic from using it, and it is also desirable to remove the car parking which stretches almost along its whole length on the eastern side. This is particularly important in that the world-famous views of the colleges from across the Backs, and vice versa, are more often than not spoilt by the presence of parked cars, and the heavy traffic which at the moment uses Queen's Road brings noise and visual disruption into the area.

There are few architectural features in Queen's Road except for the gateways and railings of the colleges, but it is very densely planted, and every effort should be made to ensure that this density is maintained.





King's College Chapel  
and the Backs

# Trinity Street and St. John's Street



Trinity Street





Chapel Court

Forecourt

Second Court

Third Court

Chapel

S.D.

Great Court

Fountain

Trinity College

(Founded A.D. 1546)

Michael House & King's Hall

Angel Court

Blue Bear Hotel

Garville and Calve College

(Founded A.D. 1248)

Garville Court

Mosses & Lodge

Chapel

Mosses' Garden

Calve Court

Trinity Court

Bank

TCB

SPH

Market

HOUSE HILL

ST. MARY'S STREET

Market Place

Fountain

MARKET



This street is perhaps the best in Cambridge. The quality of the buildings with their wealth of architectural detail, their relationship to each other and to the spaces they enclose and the general form and alignment of the frontages exhibit an unfolding succession of views which are of the highest townscape value.

The narrow entrance to the southern end of Trinity Street is in direct contrast to the wide spaciousness of King's Parade. The sudden sense of enclosure is emphasised by the great bulk of the mid-nineteenth century Gonville and Caius buildings designed by Waterhouse. This heavily detailed building dominates and overshadows smaller town buildings on the other side of the street, although together with the small courtyards on either side of St. Michael's Church they offer a small measure of relief from its over-large facade.

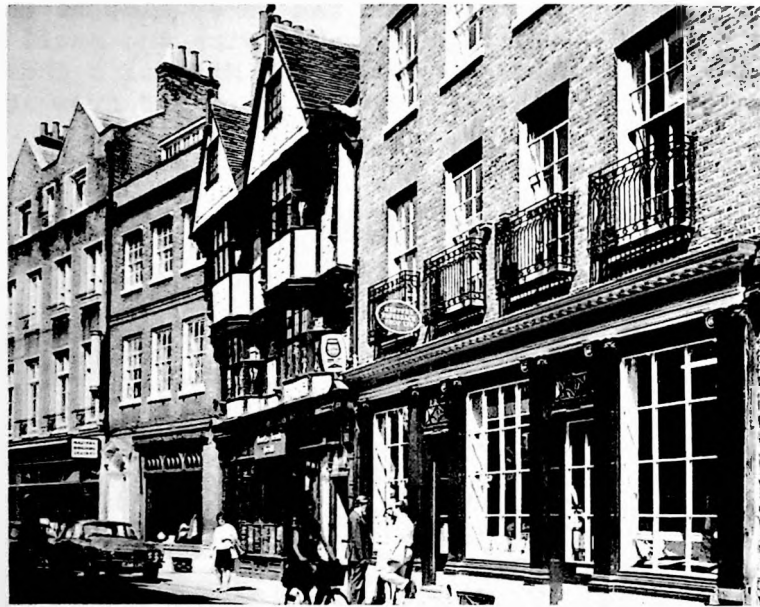


18th Century Shopfront  
Trinity Street

From this point northwards, however, the street has tremendous character. The gentle curve of its alignment gives prominence to the excellent group of town buildings on the east side which hinge round the white painted facade of the "Blue Boar" hotel. The majority of the buildings in this range and



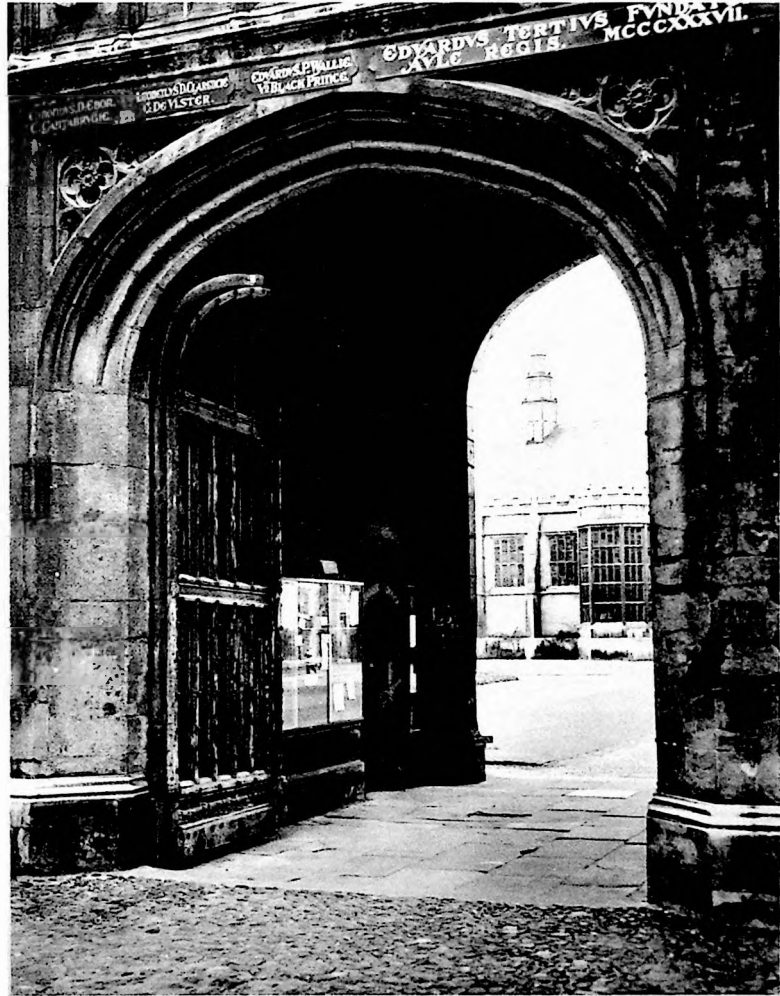
the frontages of those on the opposite side of the street date from the eighteenth century and they exhibit perfectly the essence of that which is best in Cambridge townscape, the narrow frontages, mixture of building materials, colour and architectural detail and rightness of scale for the space they enclose. No. 14, the "Turk's Head", is particularly important as it is one of the very few sixteenth century timber framed houses left in Cambridge of any elaboration. Its pargeting has all been renewed during this century, but nevertheless it remains as an example of the quality of building which at one time must have been common in the City.



The Turk's Head

Just north of the "Blue Boar" the alignment of the street suddenly curves the opposite way continuing to stop off views out of the street, but the front ranges of Trinity and St. John's Colleges drop back from the streetline to create informal open space with good views through the sixteenth century gateways to the college courts beyond. This informal space is matched by All Saints' Churchyard on the other side of the street, although this needs

improvement. Both spaces have good trees which are both a foil and an enhancement to the buildings. The complexity of the skyline is heightened by the domination of St. John's Chapel Tower and the long view over Trinity to the pinnacles of King's Chapel.



Trinity College ; View  
through Gatehouse

The open spaces form a hinge to the two curves of the street. The northern part - St. John's Street - is again different in character. It becomes enclosed as buildings come right down to the roadline. The informal group of town buildings on the east side are dominated by Giles Gilbert Scott's massive mid-nineteenth century college chapel.



The sense of enclosure is lost north of this point, however, as the new St. John's buildings are set back too far from the road, although the old building line is echoed by a pair of Dowyck beech trees on either side of the new gateway.



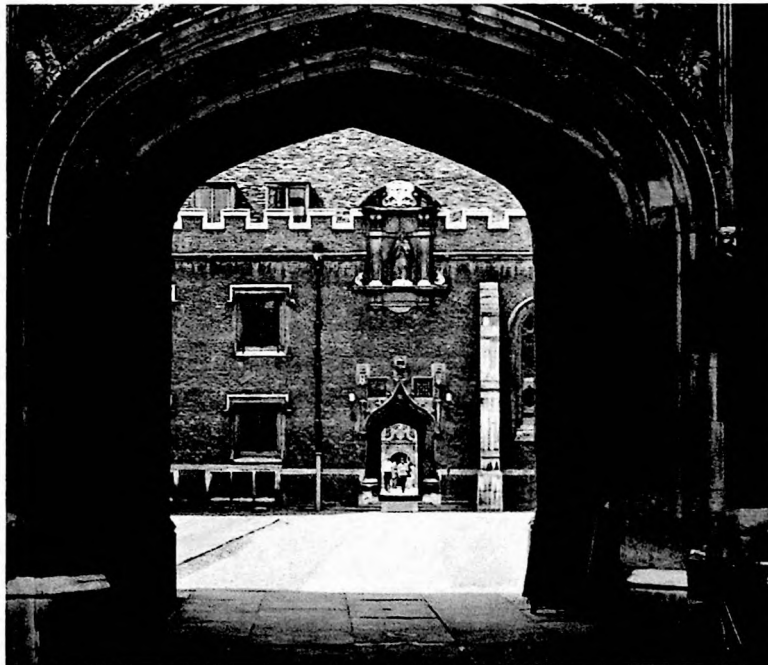
St. John's Street

Assessing any prospective changes to a street of such undoubted quality needs extreme care. It is obvious that the basic fabric must remain as little changed by modern pressure as possible, and that where change is inevitable every effort should be made to ensure that the character of the street is not disrupted. This applies right down to small detail, such as shopfronts and advertising panels which can so easily ruin the quality of the townscape. Change can be possible within these circumstances, as for example the development of Angel Court on the west side of the street where only the front walls of Nos. 27-38 were retained and new students' accommodation developed behind, and the development of the

Matthews site running back behind Nos. 19-22, where the frontage buildings have been retained and development has taken place behind. The only evidence in the street scene of this latter development is the new shop front of Heffer's bookshop, which is in sympathy with the rest of the street.

As with the majority of streets in Central Cambridge, Trinity Street and St. John's Street suffer from the conflict between traffic and townscape. Reorganisation of traffic flows in the central area will not be able to eliminate the use of Trinity Street and St. John's Street for traffic, although it is considered that present flows will be substantially reduced.

It is important, however, to remove car parking from the street and from the entrance to Trinity College as soon as alternative facilities become available.



St. John's College: View through Gatehouse



# **Lensfield Road, Regent Street and St. Andrew's Street**



Cast Iron Balcony Benet Place









REGENT STREET

Master's Garden

Telus Center

Levi's Works

Optics

St. Andrew's House

GONVILLE PLACE

HYDE PARK CORNER

HILL ROAD

Scott Power Research Institute

St. Andrew's Anglican Church

St. Alban's B.C. County Primary School

Graduate Buildings

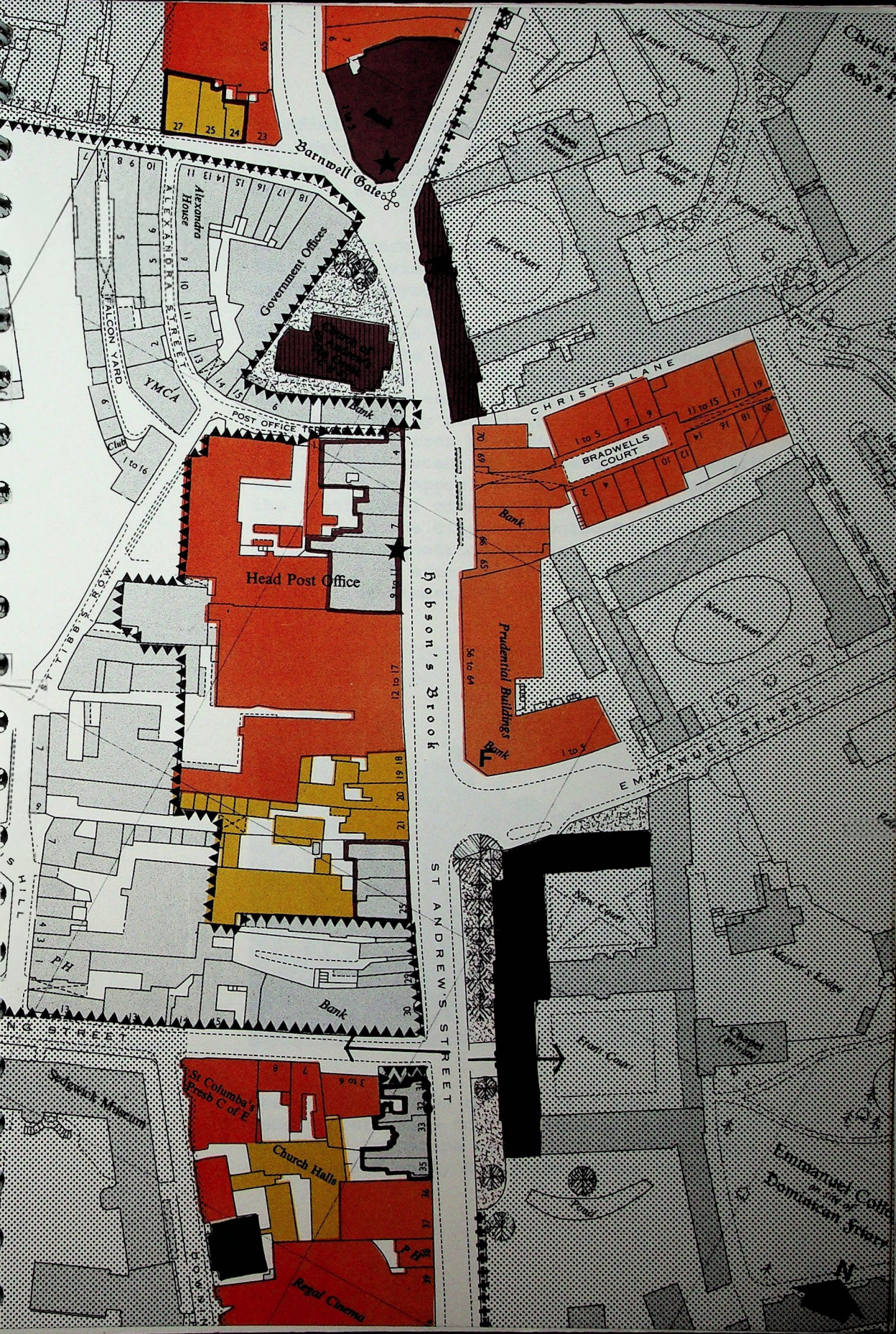
HARVEY

LARCH ROAD









Barnwell Gate

ALEXANDRA STREET  
Alexandra House  
1 to 16  
FALCON YARD  
YMCA

Government Offices

Head Post Office

Gobson's Brook

ST ANDREW'S STREET

CHRIST'S LANE  
BRADWELLS COURT  
1 to 5, 7, 9, 11 to 15, 17, 19  
1 to 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20

Prudential Buildings

EMMANUEL STREET

St Columba's Presb C of E  
Church Halls  
Royal Cinema

Emmanuel College  
Dominican Friary

N



Lensfield Road, which links Trumpington Street and Regent Street, and marks the southern edge of central Cambridge, falls into three distinct sections in townscape terms.

At the western end Bene't Place and Downing Terrace are visually part of the complex around the Royal Cambridge junction. Bene't Place in particular reinforces the urban feeling of this entrance to the City in its classical scale and proportion, and general air of dignity. The houses were built in the early nineteenth century and Nos. 4 and 5 are particularly notable for the excellent canopied cast iron balconies at first floor level. The retention of the group, recently assured by an appeal decision, will maintain the traditional view at this important entrance to the City. Downing Terrace was built to a symmetrical design in 1819, and although much altered still forms an interesting element of the Cambridge scene.



Lensfield Road

The centre section of Lensfield Road from Tennis Court Road to the Catholic Church is of little townscape merit. The long terrace of red brick early Edwardian houses on the



north side is pleasantly mature, but the vast bulk of the Chemical Laboratories opposite is particularly unsympathetic to the street scene.

Hyde Park Corner, the junction of Lensfield Road and Gonville Place with Regent Street and Hills Road, marks the entrance to the commercial side of central Cambridge from the south. The junction is dominated by the Catholic Church, which was built at the end of the nineteenth century. Like the majority of French Gothic inspired buildings, it has impressive massing and significant height and is considerably enriched with sculpture. The splendid spire is a significant landmark not only in its immediate surroundings but also from the whole area around the city. The new Local Examinations Syndicate building is of an appropriate scale for its setting, but its plainness and rather squat tower does little to enhance this important corner. From this point northwards, however, the quality of the environment deteriorates rapidly. On the north side of the junction the small group of old buildings have a certain charm but are in a poor state of repair and are likely to be affected by junction improvements, and the Turner and Hore site at the corner of Regent Street and Gonville Place can only be described as an eyesore. The site is due for redevelopment and it is necessary to ensure that the new building is of high quality to improve the townscape of the area.

Regent Street itself is particularly dull. It is long, straight and uniformly featureless, its monotony only broken fractionally by views into Downing College and across Parker's Piece and a few reasonably good buildings. Redevelopment of an extensive length of the western side is likely to take place in the near future and this could provide the opportunity to improve the quality of the street.



Regent Street



Emmanuel College



St. Andrew's Street is marginally better in townscape terms than Regent Street. The majority of the buildings on the west side have lost their individual unity by the insertion of characterless twentieth century "high street" shop fronts. The group on the corner of Post Office Terrace, however, show that by painting the brickwork of the upper storeys an element of unity can be reintroduced and the street scene made more attractive.



St. Andrew's Street

On the east side in contrast to the shopping frontages stand two formal ranges of college buildings. Emmanuel College presents a classical eighteenth century facade to the street, its central portico acting also as a terminal feature to views eastwards along Downing Street, and the trees and planting offer a welcome relief from the total dominance of buildings. Christ's College facade, although of an earlier date, was re-faced in the eighteenth century and therefore also gives the appearance of classicism. The most significant feature of the range is the gatehouse, which has preserved the gilded

early sixteenth century coat of arms of its foundress Margaret Beaufort (also foundress of St. John's College). At this point also the line of the street curves away and Lloyds Bank building - ornate and very Victorian - closes the view northwards.

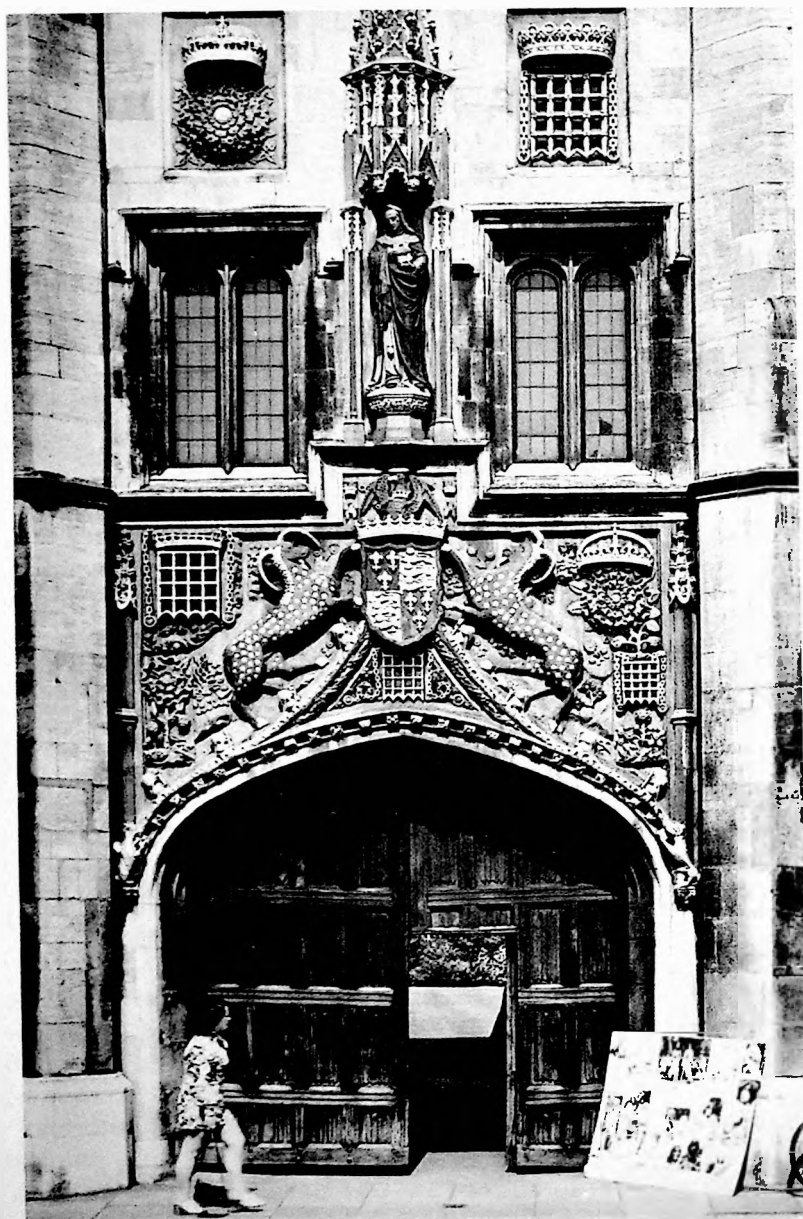


Lloyd's Bank Building

Between the two college buildings are the Prudential Building and Bradwell's Court. Before 1956 the sites of these two buildings were occupied by a very varied range of eighteenth and early nineteenth century domestic buildings, some of which had considerable architectural interest. They were important as a group, however, in that they formed a foil to the scale and formality of the college buildings. The whole complex was demolished and instead the two present buildings were erected, the Prudential Building, large scale, pompous and overbearing; and Bradwell's Court much



lower, but still of unbroken large-unit frontage. Like many other recent buildings they have absolutely no sympathy for the essential qualities of Cambridge townscape, and they make a previously lively scene dull.



Christ's College  
The Gatehouse

The old route from St. Andrew's Street to New Square used to go along Christ's Lane, but this has now been replaced by the pedestrian way through Bradwell's Court. In the process of change the direct relationship between this area and the tree-lined avenue across Christ's Pieces has been lost. Furthermore, Drummer Street Bus Station situated between Bradwell's Court and Christ's Pieces is notable for the ugliness of its bus shelters and unpleasant chain link fencing separating it from the open space. The whole untidy spectacle is finished off by the bright yellow painted caravan selling ice cream and confectionery, which sits on the corner of the path across the open space. Undoubtedly when the opportunity arises this area should be improved both by reorganisation and by the use of some of the excellent street furniture which is currently available. This in turn will improve the southern edge of Christ's Pieces, at present the only unpleasant part of an otherwise delightful open space.

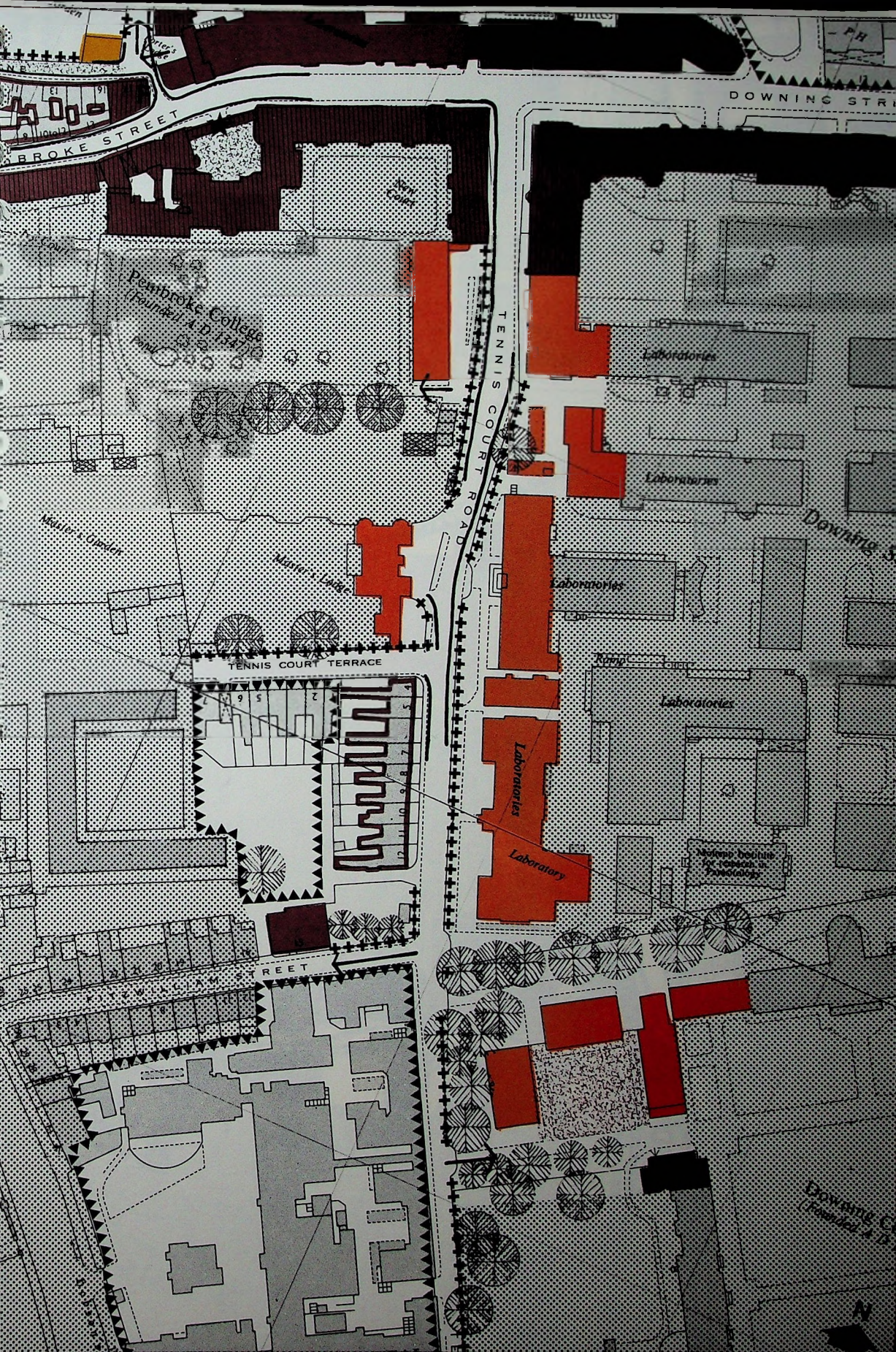


# Tennis Court Road, Downing Street, Pembroke Street and Free School Lane



Tennis Court Road











The southern end of Tennis Court Road to its junction with Fitzwilliam Street has little to offer in townscape terms. On the east side is the old Addenbrooke's Hospital, consisting of large uninspiring buildings which come right down to the back of the pavement. Redevelopment of this site will undoubtedly improve this side of the road. On the west side are the grounds of Downing College, hidden behind a high brick wall. The trees in the grounds, however, do help to foil the monotony of the existing Addenbrooke's buildings.



Fitzwilliam Street

At the junction with Fitzwilliam Street the road opens out. There is a good view down Fitzwilliam Street itself past the nineteenth century houses to the Fitzwilliam Museum. Just to the north are two plain terraces of small houses fronting on to Tennis Court Road and Tennis Court Terrace. These were built to a uniform plan about 1825. Both terraces offer an opportunity for improvement to bring the buildings up to a modern standard without substantial alteration to their external appearance. The treatment of Tennis



Court Terrace could also be improved by removing parking meters and introducing planting along the wall of the Master's Lodge on the northern side.

The remaining buildings in Tennis Court Road are neither of great architectural or townscape quality. On the east side the faculty buildings of the Downing Site, mostly built early this century in red brick, are bulky and unimaginative. Furthermore, views into the site reveal a disorder of unrelated large buildings and car parking.

The one good feature in this part of the road is the view into Peterhouse grounds through a very fine avenue of plane trees to the tower of Emmanuel Congregational church on Trumpington Street.

At its northern end, Tennis Court Road joins Downing Street and Pembroke Street. The views both ways are stopped by good buildings, Botolph House to the west, and the front range of Emmanuel College to the east. The central section of the street is flanked by large scale faculty buildings of the Downing and the New Museums sites. Most of these are stone faced and renaissance in inspiration although the only one which merits attention is the Sedgwick Museum, built in 1903, which incorporates an imposing arcaded entrance to the Downing Site with good wrought iron gates.

The eastern end of Downing Street will change considerably in the near future. The whole of the northern side from St. Andrew's Hill to St. Andrew's Street is to be redeveloped. On the southern side the two shops on the corner of St. Andrew's Street are required for road widening and St. Columba's church is likely to be redeveloped.

By contrast, Pembroke Street is unlikely to change. The best buildings are those of Pembroke College, which date from the

fourteenth to the seventeenth century. They follow the curve of the street, enhancing the sense of enclosure, and have a good silhouette of dormer windows and chimneys. Their relative austerity is foiled by the informality of the town buildings on the north side. Although these are generally not as good as other similar groups, for example those in Botolph Lane and Little St. Mary's Lane, they are worthy of being preserved in their present form.



Pembroke Street and  
Botolph House

The easternmost building of the group, Botolph House, is particularly important not only because it is a good building in its own right but because of its townscape significance as a terminal feature closing the views westwards from Downing Street and southwards down Free School Lane.



Free School Lane itself is a pleasant, quiet cul-de-sac which winds northwards to Bene't Street. It could be improved visually by removing car parking when alternative facilities become available. On its eastern side are faculty buildings of the New Museums site, smaller in scale than those fronting Downing Street, and more in harmony with the scale of the lane. On the western side is a very varied and irregular collection of buildings and walls belonging in the main to the complex of Corpus Christi College. At certain points in the lane the tower of St. Bene't's Church and the pinnacles of King's College Chapel become visible to complete a composition which is of the essence of good townscape.



Free School Lane

At its extreme northern end, Free School Lane becomes a pedestrian path enclosed between sixteenth century buildings on the east and the church and churchyard of St. Bene't's on the west.



Pembroke Street



# Market Hill and the Surrounding Streets



The eastern side of Market Hill





SIDNEY STREET

MARKET STREET

ALEXANDRA STREET

PEAS HILL

WHEELER STREET

SENATE HOUSE HILL

Victoria Cinema

Market Hostel

Arts Theatre

Bank Hotel

Alexandra House

PARSON'S COURT

Market Place

Church of St. Mary

GUILDHALL

CORN

CRESCE

Bank

Bank

Bank

Bank



Market Hill is the geographical heart of Cambridge and acts as the link between the University dominated area west of the town centre, and the commercially dominated east. The transition between the two is marked by the quality of the townscape and architecture.



St. Mary's Passage

The area west of Peas Hill from St. Mary's Street to Bene't Street retains a townscape quality typical of Cambridge as an historic town. The buildings are informally grouped, irregular in height, style and building materials, and mixed in scale and use. The street block is penetrated by pedestrian ways and there is an irregularity in the size and character of the spaces between the buildings; St. Mary's Passage is wide and relatively

formal, and is particularly important as it links the Market Square with the deep space on the west side of King's Parade, and allows views of the superb skyline of King's College and the Senate House. It suffers, however, from a surfeit of parked bicycles and motor-bikes. St. Edward's Passage is the complete opposite, being very small in scale, tightly enclosed and very informal.

Several of the buildings are worth particular note. The three churches are of architectural interest, St. Benet's because of its pre-Conquest Saxon tower, St. Edward's as a typical example of thirteenth and fourteenth century ecclesiastical buildings and St. Mary's, an elegant example of late fifteenth century perpendicular architecture. The small churchyards are also valuable for their introduction of trees and planting into the heart of the city as a foil to the tightly built up urban fabric. Many of the other buildings date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although, in common with most buildings of this date, have been subsequently remodelled and altered. The most charming of these is possibly the "Eagle" public house in Bene't Street, built in the sixteenth century, with its first floor gallery looking out on to a small secluded cobbled courtyard.

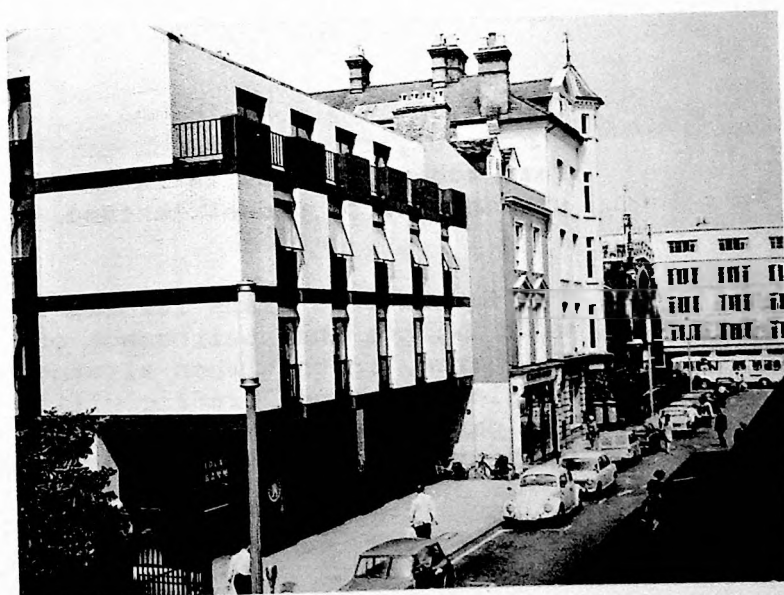
The Peas Hill Hostel (Nos. 32 and 33, Peas Hill) built in 1960-62, is an excellent example of infilling on a restricted site in that it reflects the scale and characteristics of the adjoining buildings without pastiche and adds a new but sympathetic element to the townscape.

This area should remain basically in its present form with some improvement in details of shopfronts, advertising material, street furniture and general decorative condition. It is especially important to resist pressures for the consolidation of small varied units into large scale uniform frontages.





Old Buildings between  
Peas Hill and  
King's Parade



Peas Hill Hostel

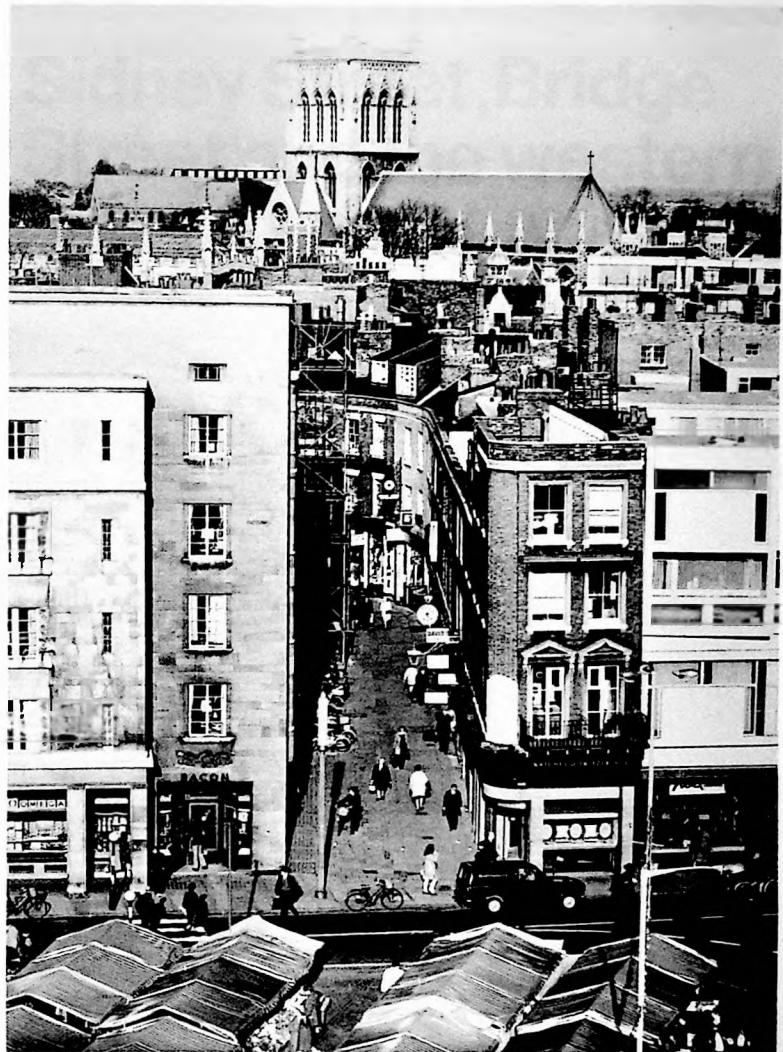
Market Hill itself is a sad example of the erosion over time of the character of the historic centre. Old photographs show the space surrounded by the same irregular mixture of buildings that exists in King's Parade. Today none of this remains. Those few units on the east side which retain some identity in their upper storeys have characterless shop fronts, and the space is dominated by the equally uninspiring and bulky Guildhall on the south and the Caius building on the north. Only two features redeem the otherwise total lack of quality. First the views out of the space, especially along St. Mary's Passage and St. Mary's Street to King's and the Senate House, and down the early nineteenth century curve of Rose Crescent with St. John's Chapel tower in the background.

Second is the market itself which occupies the central space in a cheerful, colourful, noisy, busy way. Its recent expansion has had an obvious beneficial effect. Both Market Street and Petty Cury have a nice sense of enclosure resulting from the height of the buildings in relation to the width of the street, and both have a few remaining good buildings, but in common with the rest of the commercial centre, the shop fronts in general detract from the overall image.

The south side of Petty Cury is to be completely redeveloped as part of the Lion Yard scheme, and it is intended that the street will be pedestrianised.

The future road plans for the central area will improve the environment of the Market Hill area, in that when alternative routes are available through traffic will be restricted and parking will be taken out of the east and west sides of Market Hill.





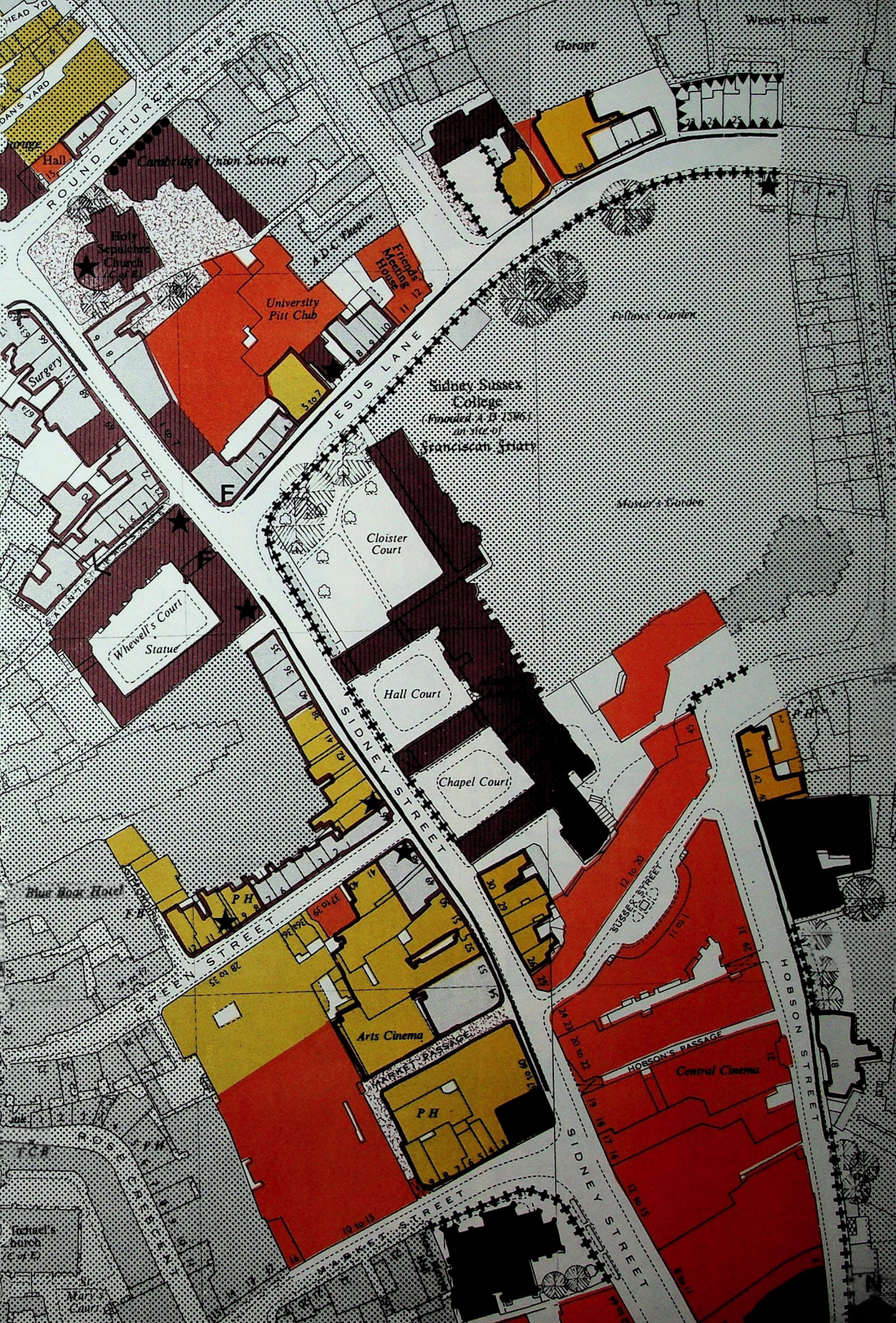
Rose Crescent

# Sidney Street, Bridge Street and the western part of Jesus Lane



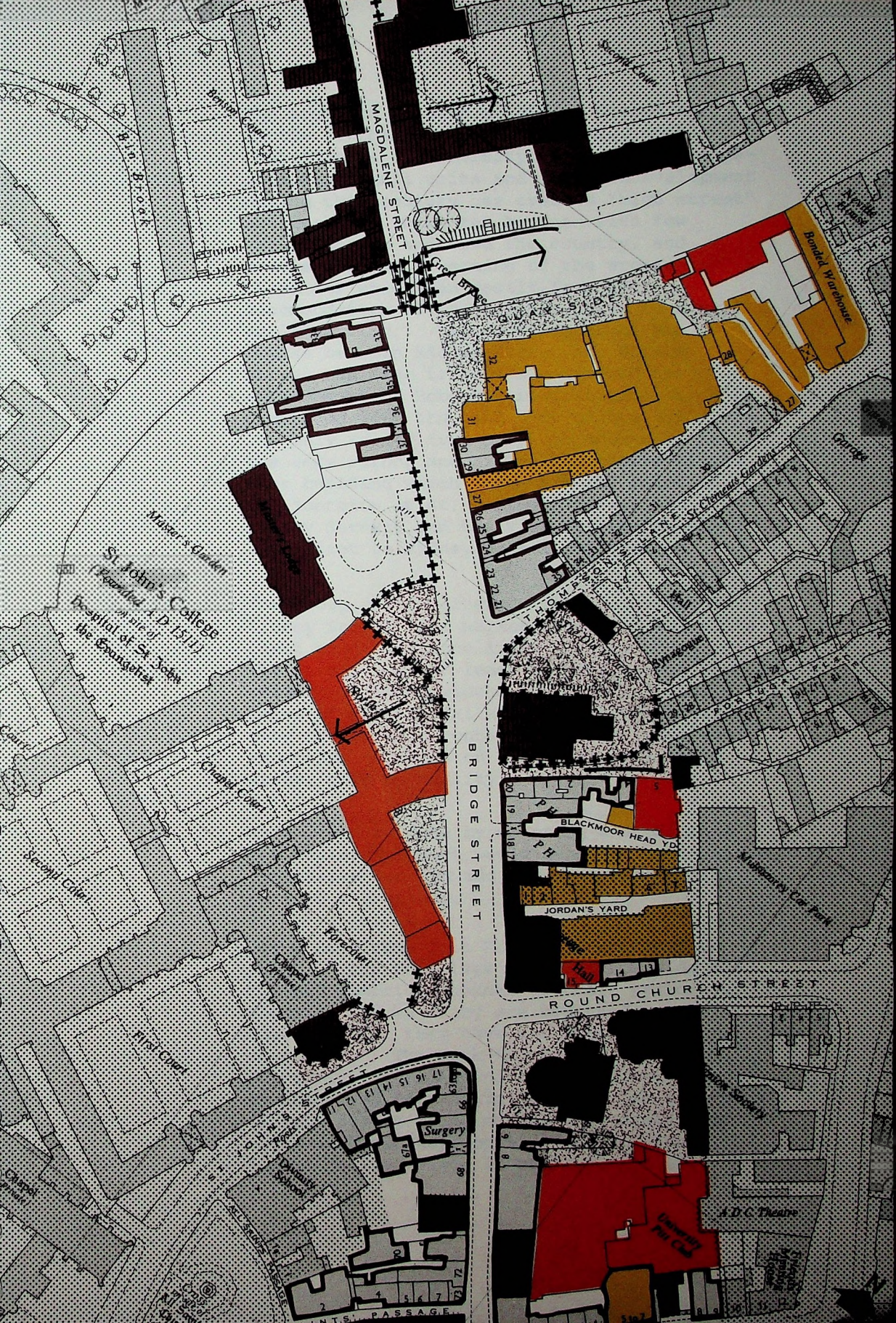
Bridge Street





HEAD VO  
DAY'S YARD  
Hall  
Cambridge Union Society  
Holy Sepulchre Church  
University Pitt Club  
A.D. 1561  
Fellows' Garden  
Monks' Garden  
Sidney Sussex College  
(founded A.D. 1561)  
an site of  
Franciscan Friary  
Cloister Court  
Hall Court  
Chapel Court  
Whewell's Court  
Statue  
Blue Boat Hotel  
Arts Cinema  
Central Cinema  
Hobson's Passage  
Sidney Street  
Green Street  
Jesus Lane  
Round Church Street  
Hobson Street  
Fellows' Garden  
Monks' Garden  
Cloister Court  
Hall Court  
Chapel Court  
Whewell's Court  
Statue  
Blue Boat Hotel  
Arts Cinema  
Central Cinema  
Hobson's Passage  
Sidney Street  
Green Street  
Jesus Lane  
Round Church Street  
Hobson Street





MAGDOLENE STREET

BRIDGE STREET

ROUND CHURCH STREET

St John's College  
(Founded A.D. 1511)  
Residential at St John  
the Evangelist

Mayer's Garden

Chapel Court

First Court

Surgery

Dental Surgery

NTS. PASSAGE

BLACKMOOR HEAD YD.

JORDAN'S YARD

A.D.C. Theatre

Banded Warehouse



The southern section of Sidney Street has little of the character associated with Cambridge as a University city. The amalgamation of small units and their redevelopment during this century has created "high street" architecture which can be seen with few variations up and down the country, and serves only as a warning of the erosion of character which can result from the accommodation of large scale units in a small scale setting. The development of the blocks between Sidney Street and Hobson Street has also irrevocably damaged the environment of Hobson Street itself, which is presented with the back ends of the buildings. The only relief from complete anonymity is the very strong and highly decorative Lloyds Bank building which forms a focal point at the junction of St. Andrew's Street and Sidney Street, and the view northwards along the street to Sidney Sussex college.

The group of buildings on the west side of Sidney Street from Market Street to Whewell's Court are rather too large for the width of the street, but at least in part retain the smaller frontage widths typical of better parts of the central area. Unfortunately, many of the shopfronts themselves, with the exception of those on each corner of Green Street have no quality.

Much could be done by cleaning and painting the buildings which would tend to reduce their oppressiveness and add some gaiety to this part of the street.

Jesus Lane runs into Sidney Street at this point. The buildings on the north side are typical Cambridge houses of their period and although the majority are now used commercially, they have not lost their character. The mock Greek portico of the University Pitt Club nicely punctuates the frontage and "Little Trinity" on the east side of Park Street is an outstanding example of eighteenth century domestic architecture little changed since it was built in 1725.

The curve of the street which contains the view is accentuated by the plain brick wall of Sidney Sussex gardens on the south side. The trees at the junction of Jesus Lane and Sidney Street/Bridge Street are particularly important as a foil to the buildings.



Jesus Lane

At this point, the character as well as the name changes and the buildings on both sides of this part of Bridge Street are of far higher quality than those in Sidney Street. On the east side new shop units have been inserted into the old buildings, but the arcade to the pavement, the variations in detail, and above all a successful co-ordinated painting scheme have enhanced this part of the street.

At the junction of Bridge Street with St. John's Street and Round Church Street the sense of enclosure which has been one of the most dominant characteristics is replaced by a much more open aspect. The new St. John's College buildings, which date from the nineteen thirties, are another example of the erosion of the former townscape quality of central Cambridge. Previously buildings had



come hard up to the road line and the street had possessed that tight urban quality that results from narrow streets and enclosed spaces. The new buildings are set back at an angle to the street line to create a group of small open spaces which although quite pleasant, lack any definite impact and could do with more planting both to create a foil to the essentially plain buildings and to reduce the apparent width of the street. The tower of St. John's chapel dominates this part of the street.



St. John's College  
1930's Buildings

On the east side of the street are several good ranges of buildings. The Round Church itself is an interesting building. Originally built in the twelfth century it was drastically restored after a partial collapse in 1841. The work was undertaken under the guidance of the Cambridge Camden Society, who carefully preserved what was left of the old building and recreated where necessary the twelfth century style of the rest. It is one of only five round churches in the country.

On the opposite corner are an important group of early buildings. Nos. 15 and 16, Bridge Street were built in the early sixteenth century, No. 12 around sixteen hundred and Nos. 10 and 11 with No. 16, Round Church Street

early in the seventeenth century.

The whole group are of great townscape significance and their preservation is important. Much harm has been done by the insertion of unsympathetic shop fronts, and the buildings are generally in a poor state of repair. A scheme has been prepared, however, for the retention and renovation of the frontage buildings with new development behind which should ensure the group's continued survival in something close to their original form.



Bridge Street

St. Clement's church with its pleasant churchyard forms a significant break in the building frontage between this group and that to the north, a typical informal group of Cambridge buildings of different heights, mixed materials and slight variations of frontage line. No. 25/26 is worth particular note in that although much altered it still shows elements of its sixteenth century origin. At this point one becomes aware of the break in the urban fabric caused by the river. Elsewhere in the city the river flows either in open landscape or has buildings only on one



bank. Here its presence is emphasised by both the hump of Magdalene Bridge and by its tight enclosure by buildings. The frontage buildings on the north side are particularly impressive, but the space down to the river needs some improvement. On the west there is a fine view of the mixture of buildings of St. John's foiled only by a splendid willow, and on the east the fifteenth and sixteenth century range of Magdalene College.

On the south side, however, there is considerable room for improvement. Quayside is the last remaining stretch of commercial waterfront in the city. At present its potential is not exploited, and it is far from the attractive area which it could become. The buildings which front on to the space at the western end are substantial, but the rest, down river as far as Jesus Green are coming to the end of their useful life and are in mixed commercial and storage uses. Redevelopment should seek to bring into the area activities which make more use of the river frontage.



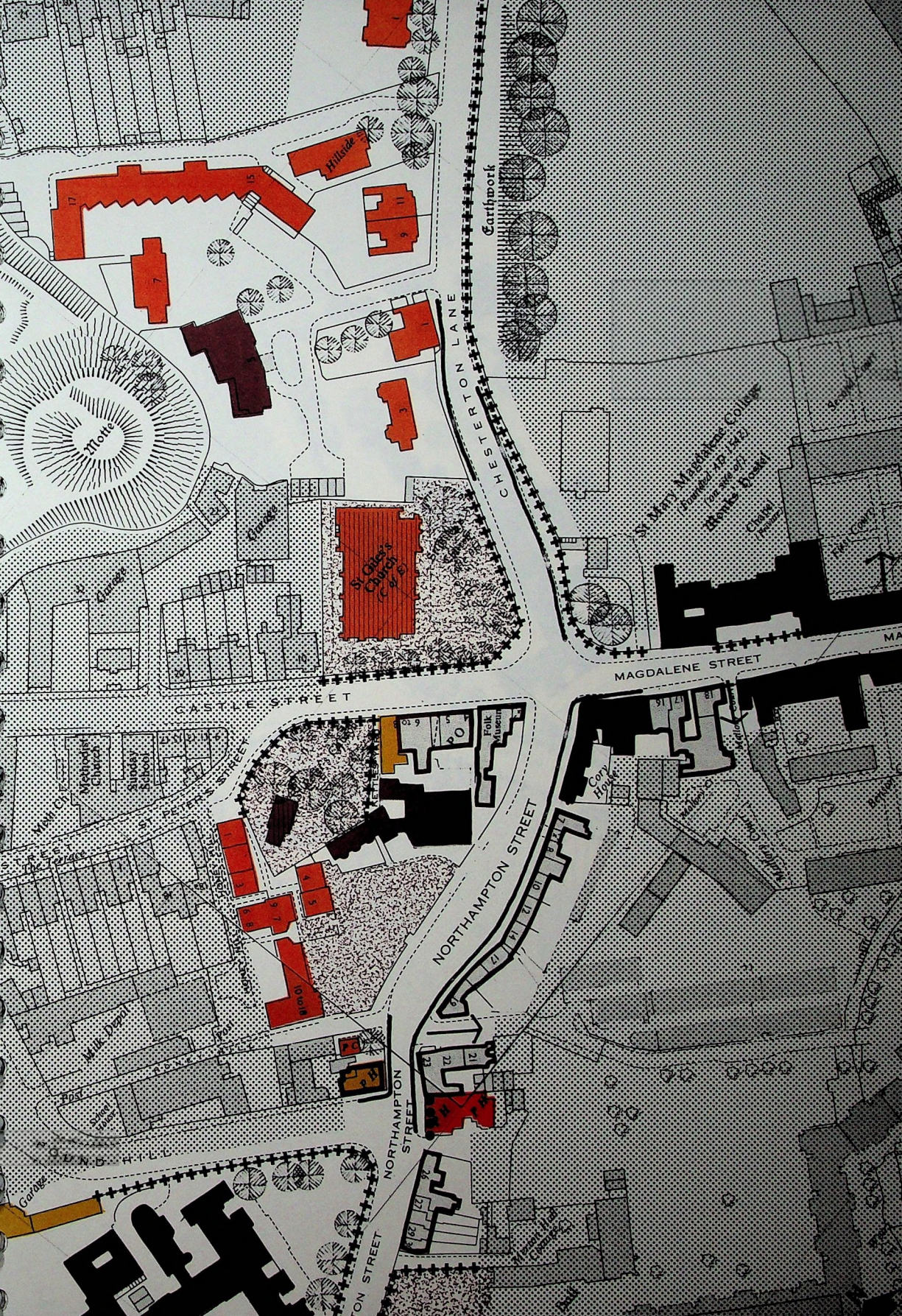
The River Cam at  
Quayside

# Magdalene Street, Northampton Street and Chesterton Road

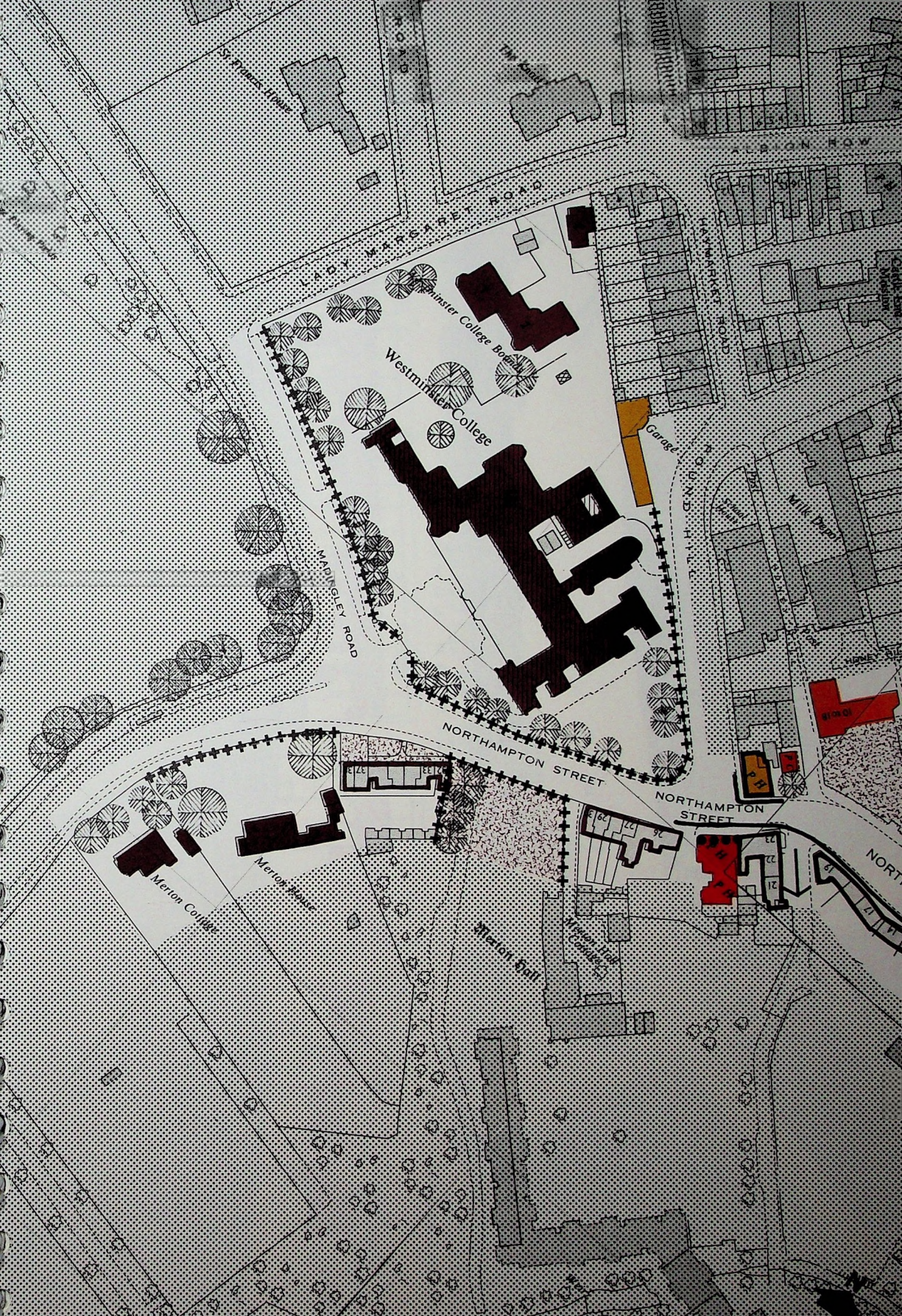


Magdalene Street









LADY MARGARET ROAD

Westminster College  
Westminster College

MERINGLEY ROAD

NORTHAMPTON STREET

NORTHAMPTON STREET

Merton College

Merton Hall

Merton Hall

Merton Hall

Merton Hall

NORTH

Garage

ROSEBAND HILL

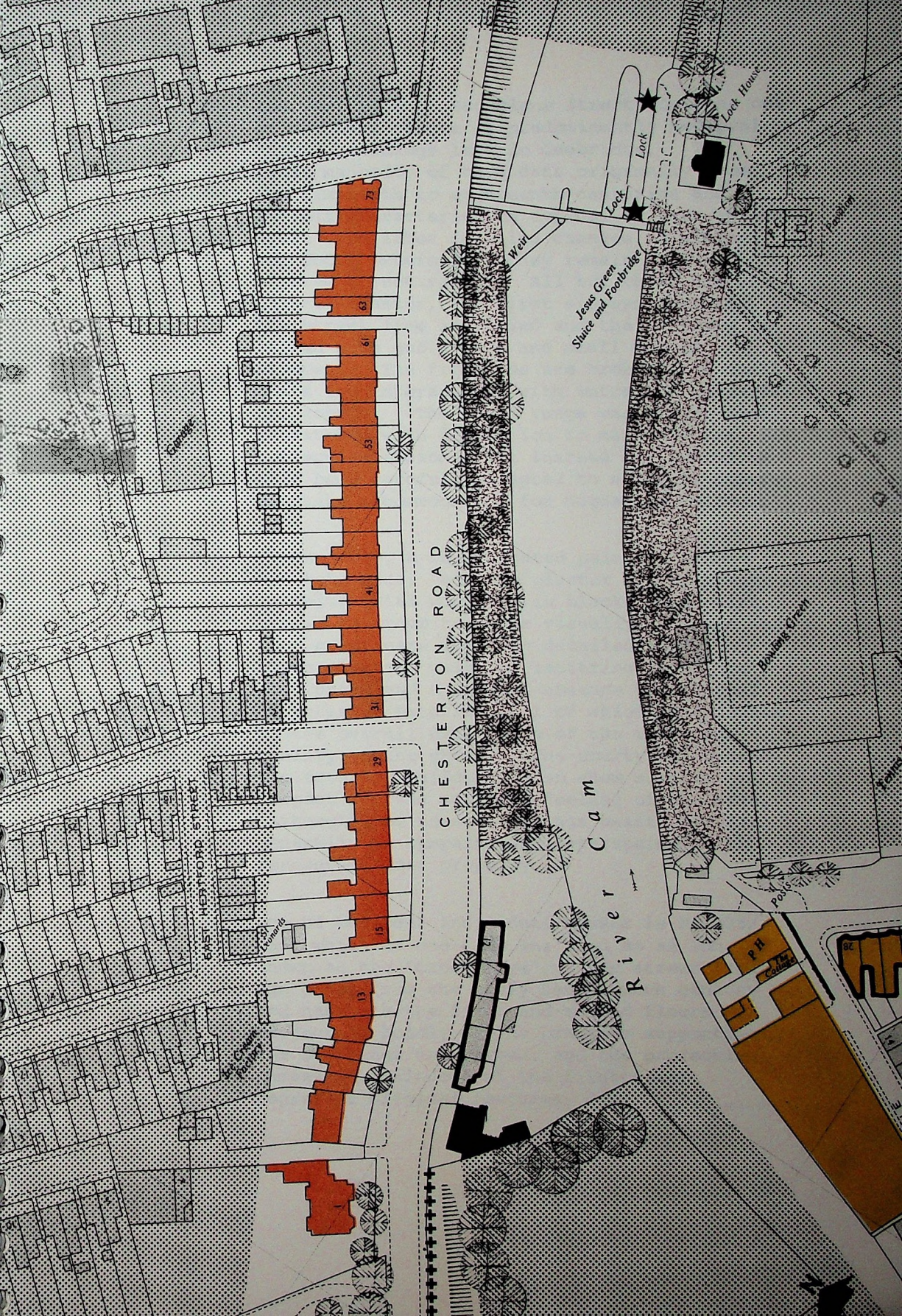
Willow

Honey

ALBION ROW

HAYMARKET ROAD







The west side of Magdalene Street contains one of the best ranges of predominantly medieval "town" buildings left in Cambridge. The great majority of them date originally from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and exhibit characteristics typical of that period. Apart from later detailed changes to windows and doors externally, they remain little altered structurally. All but three are of painted plaster, the first storeys overhang, the street line is varied and the roofline is broken with gable ends and small dormer windows. The frontages are broken into small units and interspersed with entrances to yards and courts. The whole range was at one time threatened with demolition to make way for college extensions, but instead the buildings have been carefully adapted to serve as undergraduate accommodation for Magdalene College.

Furthermore, a co-ordinated painting scheme has been used; all the plaster and brickwork in white, with woodwork in black, which ties the whole group together visually. There is also great care shown in detailed work, especially the unity of lettering above the shop units and a general absence of external advertising material, all of which contributes to the overall excellence of the townscape quality of the group. The courtyards behind the frontage buildings also show similar respect for the medieval feeling of the area. Although some newer buildings exist they are generally in sympathy and interspersed with renovated older property.

One of the best individual houses is No. 25/25a, which at one time was used as an Inn known as the "Cross Keys". The street frontage dates from the early seventeenth century and has both the first and second floors projecting boldly. The brackets supporting the overhangs are carved, and the projecting three-sided windows of the first floor represent original features.



The whole group, therefore, from Magdalene Bridge to Northampton Street must be retained in its present form as it is the only frontage of its age which survives in the city which is sufficiently extensive to evoke the medieval street scene.

The narrowness of the street enhances this atmosphere, as does the contrast with the brick faced street range of Magdalene First Court. Unfortunately, this narrowness exacerbates the traffic problem which exists in the street, and it is only very rarely that the atmosphere is not disrupted by vehicles either moving or tailing back from the Northampton Street junction. Future road plans for the City would indicate a much reduced volume of traffic which would help the street enormously.



Northampton Street

The quality of the Magdalene Street buildings is carried on round to the south side of Northampton Street. Again the buildings date basically from the same period and have been sensitively renovated. The greater width of the street and its curved alignment show off more fully the complexity of the roofline with its broken heights, dormer windows, gables and tall chimneys, all richly tiled. As with the Magdalene Street frontage, these buildings should be retained in their present form.



Northampton Street

The road here is much wider and on the north side a pleasant open space with a grass bank runs up to some old people's flats, which, with the spire of St. Peter's church behind, creates a village green atmosphere. Together with Kettles Yard at the eastern end which has a sympathetic new extension, this is a very successful piece of new townscape which captures the intimacy and humanity of scale so often lacking in new development in Cambridge.

Between No. 23, Northampton Street and the public house opposite, the road narrows suddenly and changes alignment. Westwards



from this point two good groups of cottages and two plain houses are set into a mature landscape. Westminster College, built in 1899 by H. T. Hare, is set back from the road and acts as a terminal feature for views northwards along Queen's Road. Trees and open spaces, however, become the dominant townscape element here, and there is a very definite sense of leaving the tightly built up urban area.

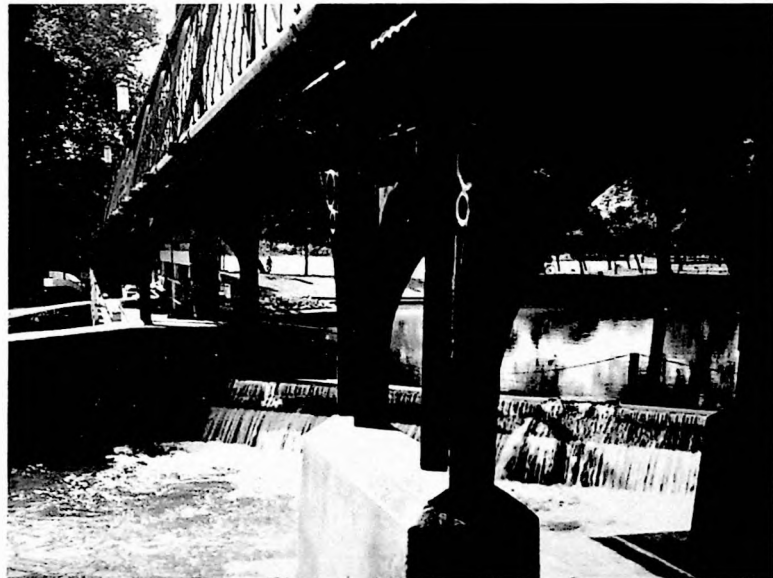


Kettles Yard & St. Peters

Eastwards from the Northampton Street junction, Chesterton Lane and Chesterton Road contain only one group of buildings of any note. These are on the south side and adjoin the Fellows' Garden of Magdalene College. Wentworth House, No. 2, and the range of single storey cottages Nos. 4-10, which were all built in the late eighteenth century have altered little since that time, possess considerable charm, enhanced by the mature landscape in which they are set. The buildings on the north side are all substantial single houses or terraces which form a backdrop to views across Jesus Green. Behind these buildings is the Castle Hill. Only the conical motte of the castle raised by the Normans in the eleventh century

remains, together with some much mutilated Norman and Civil War earthworks, but they make little impact on the townscape.

Northampton Street, Chesterton Lane and Chesterton Road suffer very badly from heavy traffic flows, of which the almost continuous train of container lorries is the most disruptive element. The construction of the northern by-pass round Cambridge will do much to alleviate this situation.



Jesus Lock



# Portugal Place and the Surrounding Area



Portugal Place







The area between Bridge Street and Jesus Green is of particular value as it represents a relatively homogenous residential environment within the city centre. There is little traffic, except for the immediate surroundings of the multi-storey car park, and the area is relatively quiet and secluded. None of the buildings and streets are of outstanding quality, but several have considerable charm.



Portugal Street

The best is undoubtedly Portugal Place. It is entered through a gap on the east side of Bridge Street between St. Clement's church and a terrace of tall houses, and the view down it is stopped off by two houses set at right angles to the frontage line. One of these, No. 8, is a good example of seventeenth century domestic building which has been

modernised without loss of period feeling. The houses and churchyard railings define a small informal open space, spoilt only by the strident frontage of No. 5, from which the rest of Portugal Place and the eastern section of Portugal Street run off at an angle. Looking back, the composition is completed by the tower of St. John's chapel rising up on the skyline. The quality of Portugal Place comes in part from the tight scale and relationships of buildings and spaces and in part from the pleasant absence of traffic.

Thompson's Lane has several interesting buildings. The Old Vicarage is specially valuable. It was built in the sixteenth century and because later alterations were only very minor, retains its original form and character. Nos. 29-31, were built much later, in the early nineteenth century, but are also well preserved and little altered. The potential quality of this part of the street, however, is prejudiced by the garage at the eastern end, which is one of the few



St. John's Road



non-residential buildings in the area as a whole. The eastern part of Thompson's Lane, St. John's Road and Park Parade are quiet streets of terraced Victorian and Edwardian houses currently being improved and modernised.

Lower Park Street is another pleasant curved terrace of small nineteenth century houses which with renovation could add considerably to the quality of the area.



Lower Park Street

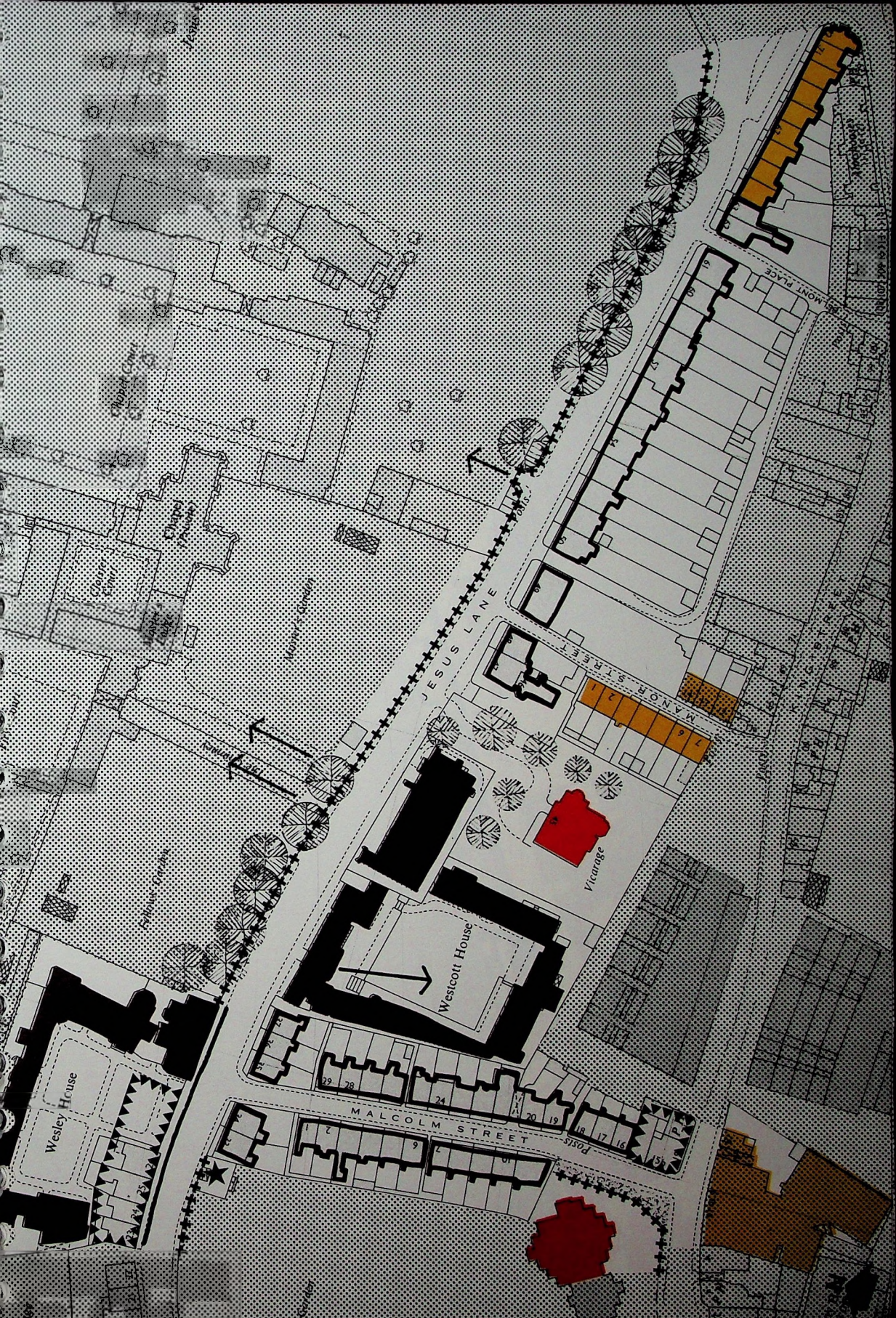
The area should remain predominantly residential and the replacement of the major non-residential uses, the garage, and the University squash courts, with further residential development encouraged. Efforts should also be made to create an access to the river frontage, which is shown on the Development Plan for the City. In general the majority of the terraces of houses have a long useful life and the accent should be on a continuation of the trend for renovation and modernisation rather than redevelopment.

# Jesus Lane and King Street

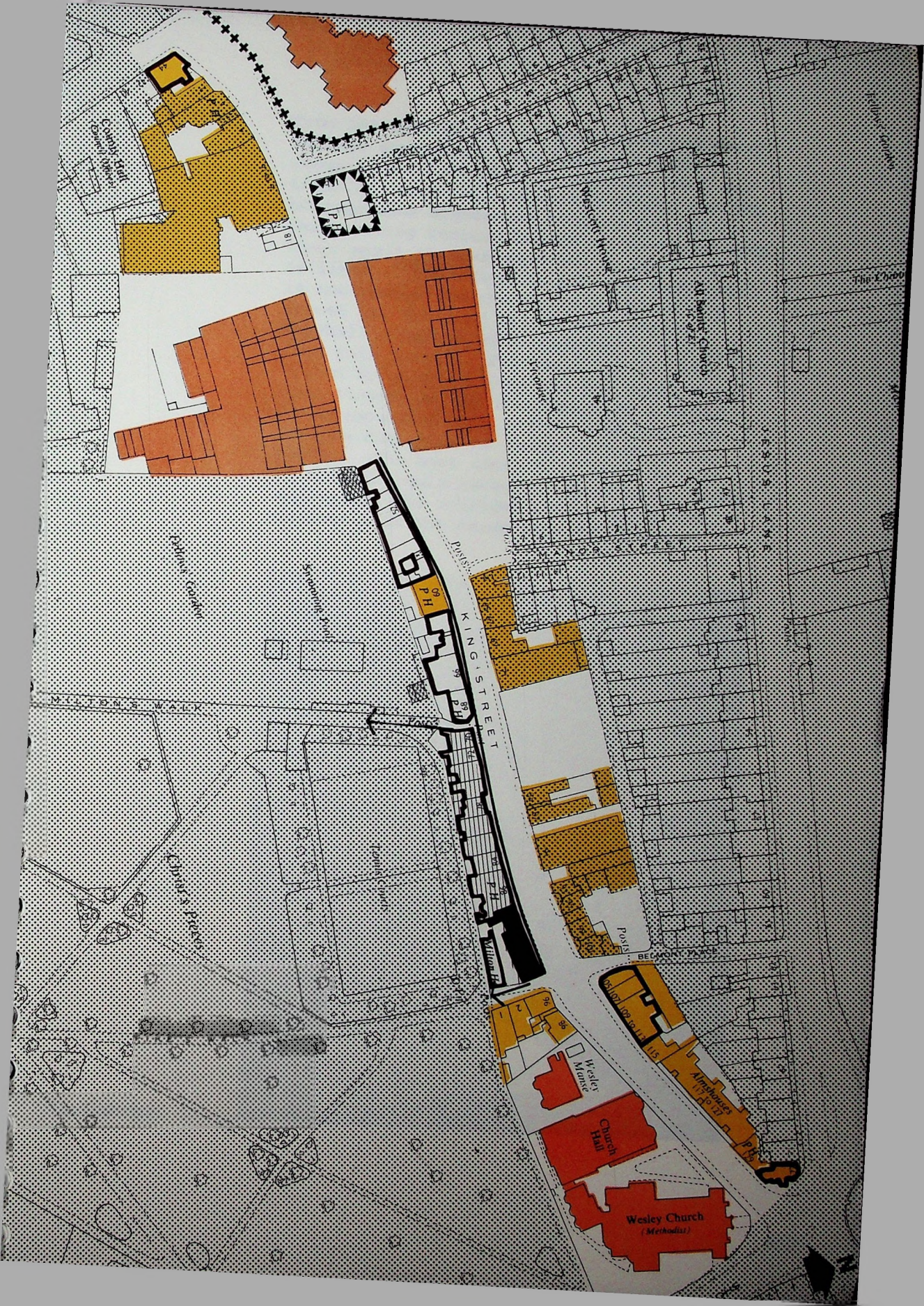


King Street











From the open spaces of Butt Green and Jesus College grounds at Four Lamps roundabout, Jesus Lane is enclosed by the high wall and trees of Jesus College on the north, and the homongeneous eighteenth century two and three storey terrace houses on the south with their small gardens enclosed by good iron railings. This general sense of enclosure is continuous for the whole length of the street and enhanced by the bend beyond Marshall's Garage which terminates the view from this point. The enclosure is only broken by glimpses into the few small scale side streets on the southern side linking Jesus Lane with King Street, and into the various entrances to Jesus College on the north. The most notable of these is the view to the main gateway, the Chimney, which emphasises the secluded character of the college from the Jesus Lane environment.



The Chimney

Almost opposite this entrance is All Saints' church, built in 1863. The very fine spire of the church is the most prominent feature in the street. It punctuates the general horizontality of the terraced houses with great emphasis, is visible for the whole length of the street, and indeed is a well known city landmark.



Jesus Lane

Beyond Wesley House, where a new building is to be erected which will largely close off the view of the pleasant open forecourt, the character of the street changes as the essentially residential character is lost to shops and offices.

Generally, with the exception of the growth



of traffic and the presence of on-street car parking, which have had an obvious deleterious effect, Jesus Lane has changed little since Victorian times and the policy towards it should be to retain this period character by careful control over the use of the buildings and the scale and detail of any redevelopment which may be necessary.

King Street falls into two distinct parts. At the western end redevelopment currently being undertaken has imposed large scale college buildings on what was a small scale street, and totally altered its environmental character.

The eastern end is very variable in quality. In general the north side has nothing to commend it; only a few buildings remain, much altered and adapted, and interspersed with vacant sites used for car parking. The south side, however, merits careful attention as it contains a group of buildings from "The Champion of the Thames" public houses to Pike's Walk. Jackenett's Almshouses built in 1790, is the only building of architectural worth, but taken together the group reflects the former character of the street with its irregularity of height, building materials and building details. It has a potential for rehabilitation and redecoration, which together with redevelopment in sympathetic scale of the north side and the planned closure of the eastern end to traffic, could create again a very pleasant area of high townscape quality. This group also makes an interesting backdrop to Christ's Pieces, and for this reason should be carefully handled. The "Champion of the Thames" sets a precedent for the treatment of the group.

It is undoubtedly too late to think of recapturing the character which King Street once showed, but it is important to ensure that future redevelopment improves the quality of the street and enhances the limited part

which it is considered important to retain.



Pike's Walk

In contrast to King Street, Malcolm Street, which links through to Jesus Lane, remains in much the same form as it was when built shortly after 1842 by a local builder, James Webster. It consists of two terraces of simply proportioned buildings in traditional Cambridge style and materials. It has a quality of unity and is full of delightful



details - cast iron railings and curly window guards particularly.

The only features which detract from its undoubted value are first the poor consideration of detail at the southern end with the car parking against the wall of the new Sidney Sussex block, and second the proliferation of T. V. aerials which seem to be particularly noticeable and spoil the essential classical simplicity of the roof line.



Malcolm Street

# Maid's Causeway, New Square and the Clarendon Street Area

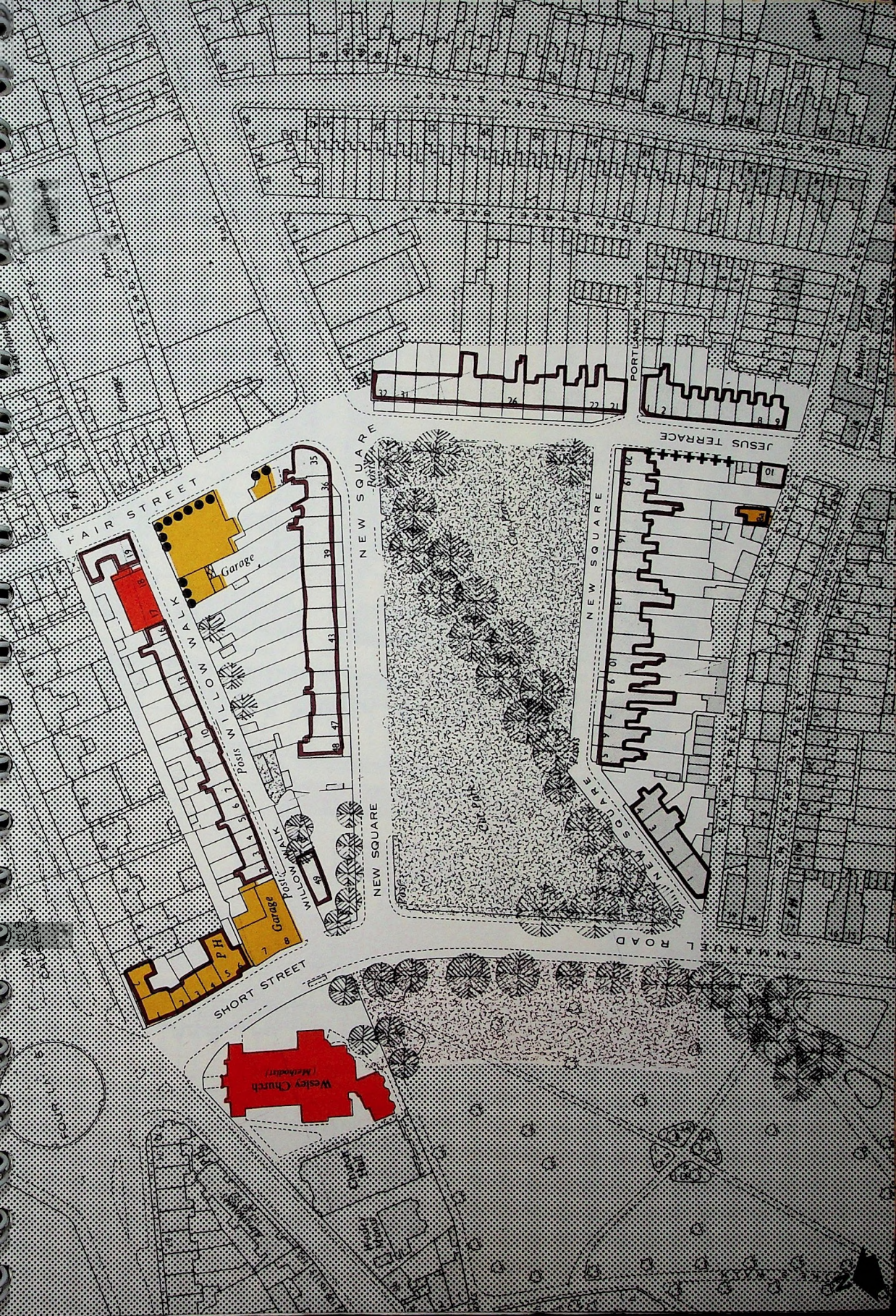


New Square









FAIR STREET

JESUS TERRACE

EMANUEL ROAD

SHORT STREET

NEW SQUARE

NEW SQUARE

MILK WALK  
POSTS

Wesley Church  
(Methodist)

Garage

Garage

Garage

Garage

P.H.

P.H.

P.H.

P.H.

NEW SQUARE

NEW SQUARE

MILK WALK  
POSTS

Wesley Church  
(Methodist)

Garage

Garage

Garage

Garage

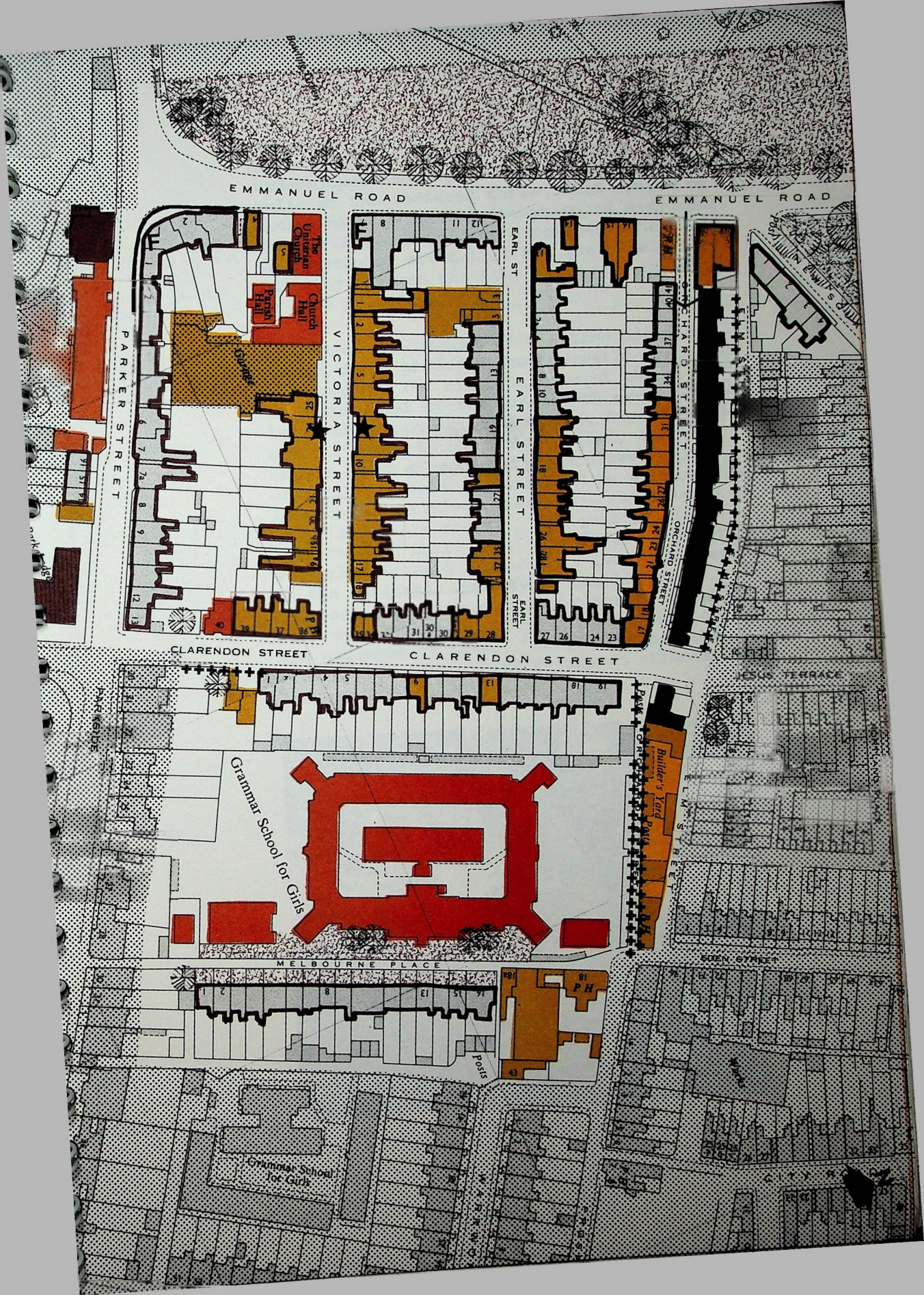
P.H.

P.H.

P.H.

P.H.





EMMANUEL ROAD

EMMANUEL ROAD

PARKER STREET

VICTORIA STREET

EARL ST

EARL STREET

EARL STREET

ORCHARD STREET

CLARENDON STREET

CLARENDON STREET

CLARENDON STREET

Grammar School for Girls

MELBOURNE PLACE

Grammar School for Girls

Builder's Yard



Until the end of the eighteenth century the eastern side of the town was largely undeveloped and lay in the Barnwell Fields, a relic of the medieval three field system of Cambridge. With the exception of Midsummer, Stourbridge and Coldham's Commons, the fields were enclosed after 1811 and their sale for building allowed the town to expand rapidly in this direction.

Consequently, instead of the slow organic growth which produced the typically irregular townscape of the historic core of the city, the first half of the nineteenth century saw large blocks of buildings being developed to overall plans in one short period, and the effect is of a regularity and classically orientated simplicity enhanced by a standardisation in building materials - gault brick walls and slate roofs. The quality of the townscape in this area, therefore, contrasts with the historic core and is less dependent on the intrinsic quality of the buildings, and more dependant on their planned relationship with the spaces that surround them or are enclosed by them. On this basis, the area divides into three groups of streets and houses.



Brunswick Walk



To the north, Brunswick Walk and Maid's Causeway look out over Butt Green and the Commons down to the river, and define the edge of the open space. The Brunswick Walk houses are simple and unostentatious and are only separated from Butt Green by a footpath. This quiet and delightful setting creates a pleasant environment. The Maid's Causeway houses (Nos. 4-20) are altogether more dignified and imposing. Together with Willow Walk they were formerly known as Doll's Close, built to a carefully balanced and integrated plan by Charles Humphrey in 1815-1826. They are built on higher ground than the main open space, and this together with their symmetry forms a suitably impressive edge to Butt Green.



Maid's Causeway

The next group to the south is New Square. The three terraces are arranged symmetrically round the square and are simple and coherent in design. The trees on Christ's Pieces effectively close the western end of the square and the double row of limes which run diagonally across to the corner of Fitzroy Street are important in breaking down the scale of the open space, but they are begin-

ning to die back and have only an estimated 20 years of further life.

The visual quality of New Square is totally spoilt at present by its use as a car park. When new multi-storey car parks are built in the Fitzroy-Burleigh Area, however, the square will be returned to grass and will once again be a valuable part of the Cambridge townscape.



Willow Walk

The area just to the east of New Square along Fitzroy Street is soon to be redeveloped, and although it lies outside the conservation area, the architectural form of the new



development must respect the quality of New Square itself, and enhance the views out of its eastern corner.

South of New Square the quality of the townscape is less good. Although the narrow streets have an urban feeling, many of the terraces do not have the same uniformity of concept and individual properties have been substantially altered. Various non-residential uses have also been established over the years and the residential environment has consequently suffered. There are two exceptions to this. One is Orchard Street, where on the north side a terrace of very small scale cottages with low eaves, unbroken mansard roofs and tall chimney stacks create a memorable townscape effect which is enhanced by the curve of the street. The second is Melbourne Place, which fronts on to a pedestrian path and has a definite quality of peaceful seclusion.



Orchard Street

In this whole area careful policies to keep what is already good and enhance the townscape

value of the remainder will have to be formulated. Those terraces of uniform design which remain, Maid's Causeway, New Square, Willow Walk etc., should have their appearance preserved. For the rest it is desirable to recreate the uniformity of treatment which this sort of building style needs, in terms of painting and decoration, and to ensure that any redevelopment which may be necessary does not disrupt the visual unity or the residential character of the area. Furthermore, any large sites which become available in this area should be developed for residential use. It is important to note that over the past few years many properties in the area, especially in Victoria Street, Earl Street and Clarendon Street have been renovated and improved, a trend which should be given every encouragement.



Melbourne Place



# Parker's Piece



Park Terrace







Parker's Piece is one of the most important public open spaces in Cambridge, and is some 23 acres in extent. Part was obtained for the town from Trinity College in 1613 in return for lands by the side of the River Cam where the college now stands.



Parker's Piece

The frontage buildings were not developed until the early nineteenth century. Of the original buildings only 2 major groups remain. The houses on the north west side, fronting on to Park Terrace were built to a comprehensive plan between 1831 and 1838. The two main terraces are tall three storey blocks, well proportioned and with good cast iron balconies at first floor level. Between them, the two middle houses are slightly smaller and set back from the building line,

and at the ends are two freestanding houses, Park Lodge and Gresham House, which are different in design but balanced in terms of mass and form. The whole terrace is linked together with screen walls and has a unity of form and architectural treatment and forms a suitably dignified backdrop to the open space. The University Arms Hotel dominates the north western corner of the open space. It is a bulky Victorian building with a new extension on to Regent Street, made the more noticeable through the lack of a tree screen common to all the other frontages.

The north eastern frontage to Parker's Piece along Parkside is less effective than Park Terrace. There was no comprehensive scheme for this side and the buildings, although having a common architectural style and materials, are not so imposing. At the eastern end the newly completed Police Headquarters reflects the height and scale of the adjoining buildings, and is suitably subdued in the colour of its materials, whereas the Fire Station has little sympathy with the townscape in form or materials.



Parkside



On the Gonville Place frontage almost none of the original buildings remain. The curtain wall of Parkside Swimming Pool allows views into the pool itself while at the same time reflecting the landscape and trees outside. Further south the new Queen Anne Terrace multi-storey car park replaces some large red brick Victorian buildings which were of little quality. New buildings are being constructed on the Gonville Hotel site, and finally there are the recently completed Local Examinations Syndicate offices. However, this corner of Parker's Piece is dominated and unified by the soaring spire of the Catholic Church.

The remaining frontage along Regent Terrace has very little to commend it. It consists for the most part of the backs of the properties fronting on to Regent Street and needs positive treatment to screen it from view.

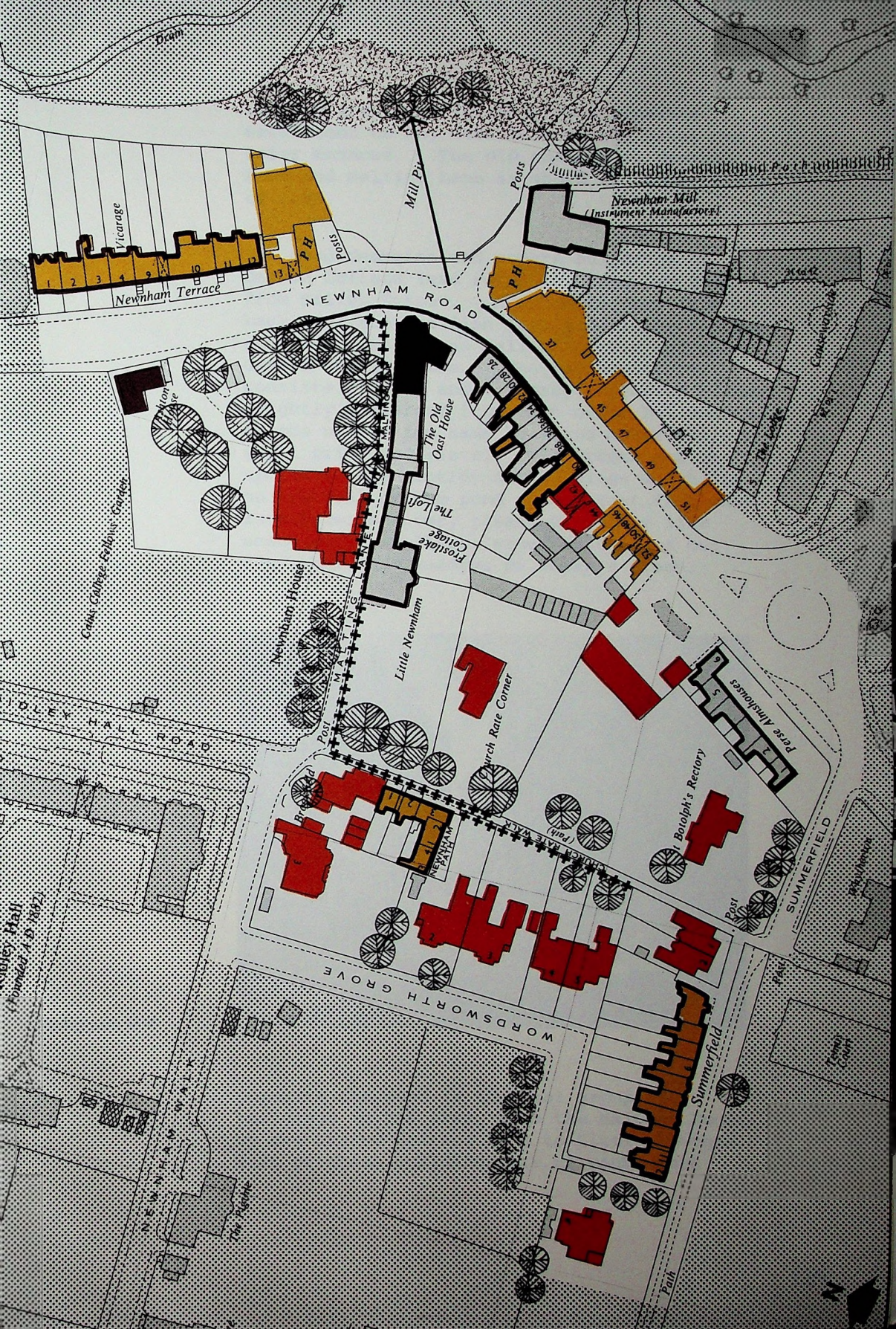
The great townscape quality of Parker's Piece comes, therefore, not so much from the intrinsic merit of buildings surrounding it, but from its extent and openness of character in contrast to the built up areas of the town which surround it. Moreover, it is the trees rather than the buildings which define the edge of the open space. Many of these are elms which have an estimated life of a further 20 years, but the limes along Parkside are in less good condition and may only live for another 10 years. Serious thought, therefore, should be given to a scheme for the replacement of these trees. Without them, the character of Parker's Piece would change for the worse. This applies also to the trees in Peter's Field on the north east corner of Parker's Piece, which may only live for a further 5 to 14 years. Furthermore, as it is the trees which define the edge of the space, care should be taken that new developments do not exceed the height of the trees as this would immediately tend to reduce the visual scale of the space.

# Newnham



Newnham; Mill Pit and the Malting House

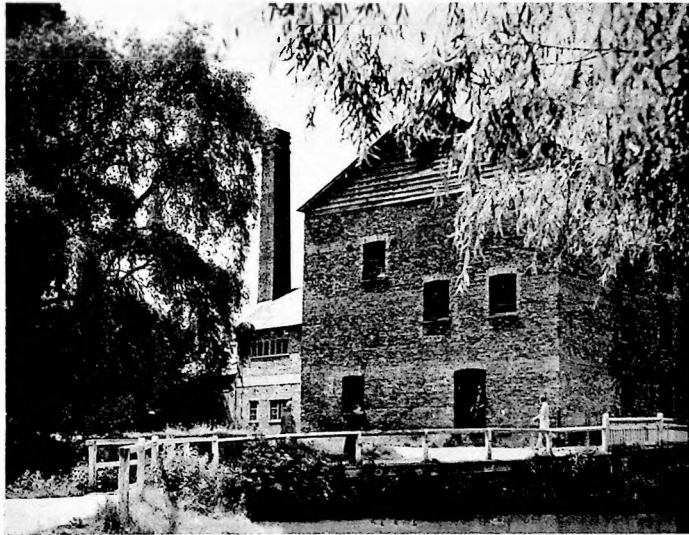






Newnham grew up originally as a separate settlement on the west bank of the River Cam water meadows. The old nucleus in Newnham Road and Malting Lane is shown on Loggan's map of 1688.

The good Georgian and modern buildings of Darwin College lead round into Newnham Road from Silver Street. Newnham Terrace is set back from the building line and nicely flanked at either end by the hall of Darwin and the Granta Public House. The terrace itself consists of 2, 3 and 4 storey Victorian houses, slightly different from each other but unified by the use of the same building materials - gault brick and slate. The Granta Pub is spoilt by some untidy outbuildings which lie on the bank of the pond and detract from what is otherwise a very pleasant village like scene with excellent large scale views out over the water meadows of Sheep's Green.

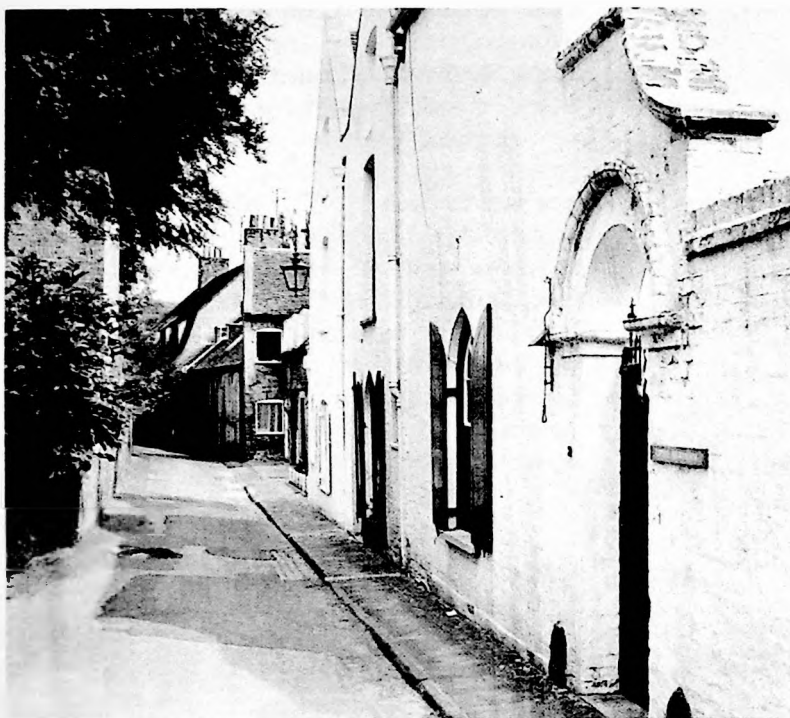


Newnham Mill

Opposite the pond is the best group of buildings in the area, from the Malting House up the narrow Malting Lane to Little Newnham. Most of these buildings are of eighteenth



century origin but have been very much altered and adapted. Nevertheless, the quietness of their setting, their varied height, style and frontage lines create a delightful piece of townscape.



Malting Lane

The built up part of Newnham Road is very variable in quality. On the north west side the cottage buildings, now shops, are basically pleasant, but in most cases the shop windows have detracted from their quality. The group as a whole is spoilt by the infilling of Nos. 42 and 44, which are both set back from the frontage and unsympathetic in style and treatment. They provide an object lesson in how not to treat infilling on a restricted site. On the south east side the mock Tudor and mock red brick Georgian of the "Jolly Millers" and the old Cocks' garage are of little townscape value, although surprisingly the shop windows of Nos. 45-49, although pastiche, are very similar to those better early nineteenth century examples elsewhere in the town.

Opposite the junction with Fen Causeway is a pleasant group of Almshouses built in 1861, with a delightful garden. This whole length of Newnham road suffers very badly from traffic flow, especially heavy lorries. When alternative routes are available in west Cambridge, the traffic volumes should be reduced, much to the benefit of the area. The rest of the area consists mostly of low density residential properties, set in large gardens with very plentiful trees and planting. It is pleasant and quiet, with most of the houses fronting on to pedestrian paths.



Almshouses in  
Newnham Road



# The Economics of Conservation



The buildings and environment of a town are a living record of its historical and social development and fit into a pattern of continuous change and adaptation. The visual quality of historic towns often arises out of the slow rate of change which has existed throughout the town's development causing buildings of different ages, reflecting the level of architectural knowledge and locally available materials of past periods, and environments reflecting previous social patterns, to stand side by side. During the last few decades, however, the rate and scale of change has increased dramatically and many towns are faced with continuous pressure for the replacement of the old with the new. Moreover, with universally available building materials, and the growth of national organisations with common trade marks one town grows to look like dozens of other towns.

Pressure for change will always exist just as society itself is always changing and creating new patterns of functions which demand new patterns of accommodation. The problem of conservation, therefore, is of keeping the essential character which makes one town different from another, by controlling the rate and scale of change and not just by preserving the town's most important buildings.

In certain cases the rate of change can be modified by implementing policies which seek either expansion or restriction of growth. In other cases pressure for change can be siphoned off to other areas where redevelopment is acceptable or desirable. In any case it is necessary to fully understand the complex functioning of the town so as to be aware of the effects of defining a policy for conservation.

Whatever the peculiarities of each unique case may be, however, and whatever overall measures are taken to produce the most



desirable rate of change the one certainty is that economic viability in addition to good intentions is essential to conservation. Conservation policies will only be implemented if an economic return can still be obtained from old buildings which would otherwise be redeveloped.

Four classes of obsolescence can be identified:-

**Structural obsolescence:** where the fabric of the building no longer fulfils its structural requirements.

**Functional obsolescence:** where the restraints imposed by the exterior of the building make the internal arrangement unsuitable for its present use.

**Locational obsolescence:** where the building and its potential uses are no longer satisfactorily related to the area in which it stands.

**Environmental obsolescence:** where the conditions in the surrounding environment (neighbouring buildings or traffic) make the existing use, or sometimes any use, of the building unacceptable.

All these categories eventually show themselves as an economic problem. Because of the obsolescence for one or more of the above reasons the expenditure necessary to put matters to right does not produce an adequate return. The buildings will then not be maintained in a reasonable state of repair. Furthermore, once neglect has taken hold and decay has resulted this will have an effect on adjoining buildings and on the environment in general, and the bad will continue to drive out the possibility of good.

Where the consequent neglect has gone too far, or in certain cases has been

hastened, then demolition is often the only course of action left open. The job of the conservationist, therefore, is to ensure that there is an incentive to avoid obsolescence.

Private investment, with the exceptions of altruism, public mindedness, or a sense of civic responsibility, will only happen if there is adequate financial inducement and no more attractive alternative. In many cases an adequate financial return can be obtained by ingenuity in adaptation and conversion of existing premises. There are many examples of the success of this method - chapels, windmills, oasthouses and the like, have been converted into houses; houses have been converted into offices, flats or hotels; the upper floors of commercial premises have reverted to residential use. Success in this field depends on the goodwill and enthusiasm of private owners, and flexibility and realism on the part of the Local Authority wherever possible in applying normal standards - land use allocations, building and fire regulations, floorspace restrictions, car parking requirements, etc.

Where an owner is in difficulty local authority funds may help him as necessary, e.g:-

- by lending at a commercial rate where the building will offer a commercial rate of return but doubtful security for a loan.

- by lending at a concessional rate where the building will offer only a low or a deferred return.

- by grants where no return is likely.

Because of the limited funds available, each case must be treated in a way which requires the minimum outlay.



The Local Authorities have a problem with expenditure on improving the environment, particularly in towns of great character, in that it is almost impossible to recoup it from private individuals who benefit from that improvement.

There are several ways in which available capital could be allocated:-

By conservation of buildings within the Authority's ownership so as to set an example for private investment;

By general environmental improvement to raise the standard of the setting of buildings and give inducement for the conservation of those buildings;

By acquisition and improvement of privately owned buildings which are incapable of economic preservation even with grant aid;

By acquisition of buildings which will improve in value as the result of public expenditure; and

By providing a public advisory service on the ways and economic results of conserving old property.

In the final analysis, however, it must be recognised that the amount of public funds available for conservation work is limited and that it will be financially impossible to conserve all that is desirable. Therefore, some degree of selection will be needed so that part of the heritage may well be sacrificed for the better conservation of the remainder.

It is essential not to fall into the trap of trying to conserve too much and ending up by conserving too little.

# A Synopsis of the Legislative Background to Conservation





# A History of the English Language to 1700



### The situation before 1967.

Prior to the passing of the Civic Amenities Act, 1967 and the Town and Country Planning Act, 1968, legislation in this field was concerned only with the protection of individual buildings of historic or architectural merit. These were classified according to their degree of importance into categories and after various consultations appeared on a statutory list. By mid-1966 some 90,000 buildings in England and Wales were on these lists. The categories were as follows:-

- Grade I - Buildings of outstanding merit which should be preserved at all costs (approx. 4% of all listed buildings).
- Grade II\* and II - Buildings of special merit, where every effort should be made to preserve them. (Grade II\* buildings being transitional between Grade I and Grade II).
- Grade III - Buildings which were not as important, and which did not, therefore, justify inclusion on the Statutory list but which were drawn to the attention of the Local Authority so that the case for preserving them could be considered.

(In Cambridge, the number of listed buildings and parts of buildings was as follows;

- Grade I - 44 - 6% of the total.



Grade II & II\* - 262 - 35% of the total.

Grade III - 441 - 59% of the total.)

In general terms, the protection which this listing afforded was relatively powerful, but the procedures by which it was applied to individual buildings threatened by demolition or alteration was extremely cumbersome. As a result, although many fine buildings were saved, many more were lost. Furthermore, the ultimate deterrent, in terms of the penalties imposed for illegal action were very small.

The most serious defect of this earlier legislation was that it only applied to individual buildings and did nothing to protect groups of buildings and their setting which in many cases are a determining factor in the quality of environment of an historic town. As a result, the character of important parts of towns was eroded by a series of small demolitions and redevelopments which were outside the scope of specific protection, except for the normal processes of development control which were often inadequate for the purpose.

During the last few years, however, there has been growing concern with the quality of the environment in general, and that of historic towns in particular, due in no small part to the work of local authorities, national and local amenity societies and the press. This crystallisation of public opinion has been responsible in part for the new legislation which has radically changed the system.

#### The Civic Amenities Act, 1967.

The Civic Amenities Act which came into force on 27th August, 1967, made a major change in the previous legislation. It recognised that places as a whole may have a character which is greater than just the sum of its

individual historic buildings. The Act, therefore, requires local planning authorities to define those parts of their area which are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as Conservation Areas. Within these areas the object is to preserve and enhance the environmental quality and to take special care in exercising planning functions so that the character is not impaired. Any application for development which would have an adverse effect must also be advertised so that the public may have an opportunity to pass comment.

The Act, therefore, introduced the concept of Conservation as distinct from the solely Preservationist attitude of previous legislation. The aim of Conservation is to ensure that those changes which are a natural part of any town's development are sympathetic to the ambience of the area, and enhance rather than erode its character. Despite the fact that the actual preservation of buildings must remain an important concept, especially in a City such as Cambridge which has so many fine buildings, the Act recognises that no place can become purely a museum piece.

#### Town and Country Planning Act 1968, Part V.

Although the Civic Amenities Act had made some changes which strengthened the protection afforded to historic buildings on the statutory list, it remained for Part V of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1968, to re-organise the previous cumbersome procedures. In general terms previous legislation had required that a person wishing to demolish or alter a listed building gave notice to the local authority who then had a period of time in which to concur or to make the building subject to a building preservation order.

Part V of the 1968 Act replaced this system with one which is much more satisfactory.



It introduced a system of listed building consents whereby any proposal to demolish or alter a building on the statutory list has to have specific permission very similar to an ordinary planning permission for development. This change did away with the need for individual building preservation orders for all buildings on the statutory list, although it is still possible for a preservation notice to be issued for buildings not on the statutory list, giving the Secretary of State for the Environment six months in which to decide whether to list it or not. Certain classes of listed building consent applications have to be advertised to give the opportunity for public comment.

The local authority still has powers of compulsory purchase of neglected listed buildings as before, but an important new concept has been introduced which allows the authority to pay minimum compensation only at a value which ignores the potential development value of the site, where the neglect has been deliberate.

Part V of the 1968 Act also allows, for the first time, the listing of Crown Property, thus bringing it within the ambit of listed building consent procedures, despite the fact that Crown Property is not subject to normal development control.

The Act also provides for a significant increase in the penalties which can be imposed for carrying out work on a listed building without the necessary consent. The person concerned may now be liable to a heavy fine or imprisonment or both; or he may be required to restore the building to its former state. This provision has gone a considerable way towards deterring the demolition or alteration of listed buildings in order to realise potential development value.

### Other Legislation.

The concept of Conservation is not limited to just the preservation of buildings, but extends to the improvement of the environment, and other legislation under various Acts helps to do this.

One feature of much Conservation work is concerned with the creation of pedestrian areas. Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1968, gives a local authority power to convert an existing road into a pedestrian way in order to preserve the amenity of an area. Similarly, the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1967, as extended by Part IX of the Transport Act, 1968, enables the use of a road by vehicles to be prohibited on amenity grounds for a period not exceeding eight hours a day, and in exceptional circumstances for up to 24 hours a day. The Housing Act of 1969 also allows a local authority to close roads to traffic in a General Improvement Area.

The upgrading of existing housing areas is facilitated by provisions within the Housing Act 1969. This increased the grants payable for the improvement of old houses, and also made provision for the definition of General Improvement Areas within which the authority can both make provisions for improving the housing and also qualify for grant for improving the environmental quality of the area, subject to certain overall limitations.

Finally, it has long been recognised that trees are often a very important ingredient of the character of an area, and the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order) Regulations 1969 enable a local authority to protect trees within its area from felling or lopping by making them immediately subject to a tree preservation order.

It should be apparent, therefore, from this



brief synopsis of the main legislature that applies to Conservation and Preservation, that the local authority has very wide powers which can be used to help in the essential task of conserving and enhancing the character of those parts of the local environment which may also be (as in Cambridge) part of the national heritage.

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